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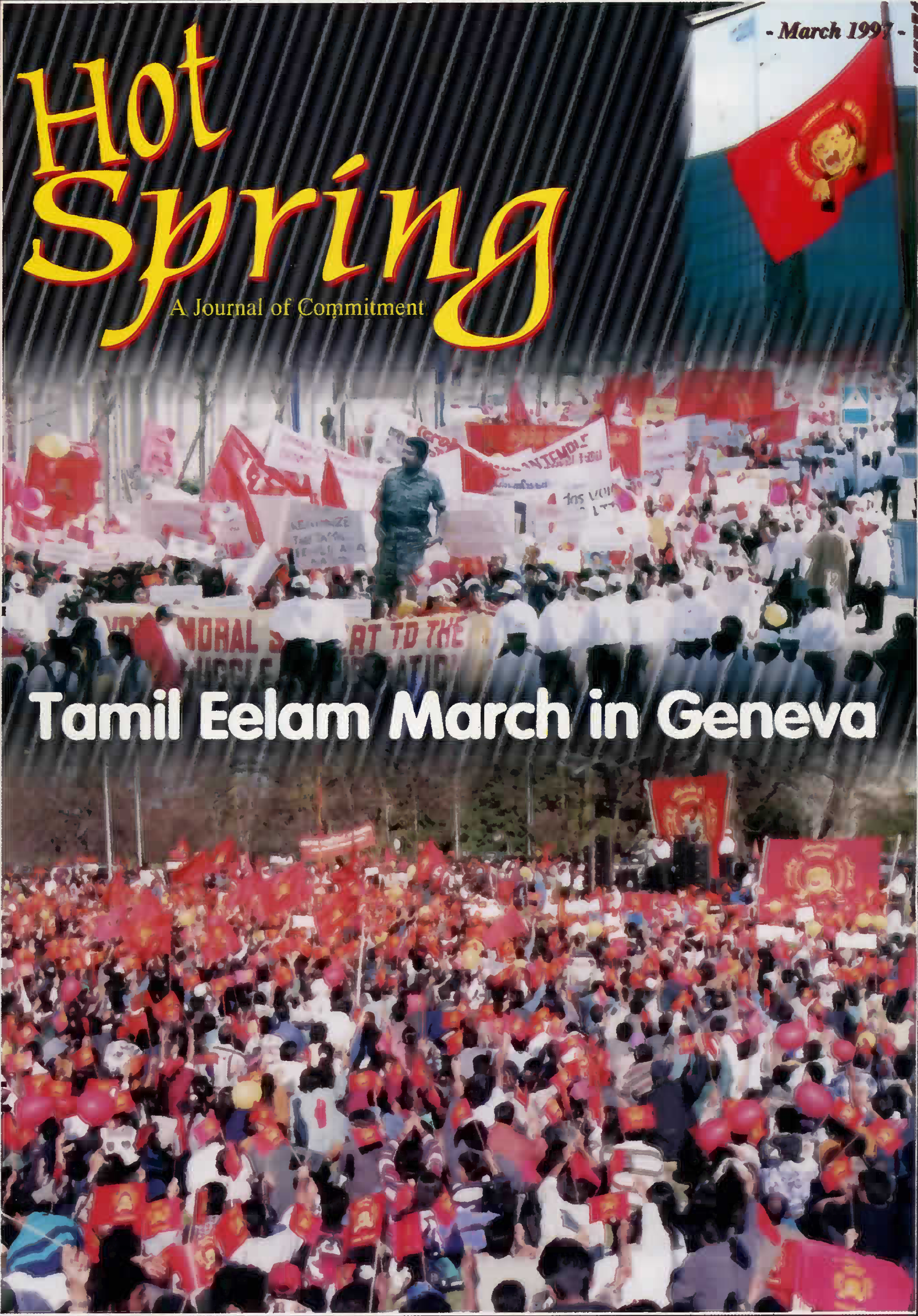
- March 1997 -

Hot Spring

A Journal of Commitment



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Hot Spring

A journal of commitment

Vol: 2 Nº: 3 March. 1997

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— March Highlights —

Bogus ballot papers and missing poll cards. Nearly 2000 violent incidents. Intimidation, grenade attacks, assaults, kidnapping, ballot rigging, impersonation. Sri Lanka went through another exercise in democracy almost exclusively for the Sinhala people with the war-torn Tamil-populated north and east reserved for the war. President Chandrika's ruling People's Alliance claims convincing victory.

President Chandrika's Air Force adds to its earlier misfortunes by losing three more planes - a Y-12 transport plane, destroyed by the Tigers at China Bay airbase in Trinco, on the 6th, a Pucara ground attack plane which crashed on the 15th and a M-24 helicopter gunship which went missing,over Tiger,controlled area in Mullaitivu on the 19th.Grand total now: 16 aircrafft.

Arafat pulls out gun

Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat on his visit to Colombo, caused no little embarassment. First, he offered to mediate for peace,which naturally embarrassed the Chandrika government which is only attuned to thinking of"war for peace."Rejecting the offer with politeness, L.K. described Arafat as "an old friend of Sri Lanka", while not mentioning anything about the NEW friend of Sri Lanka, known well to Arafat, which keeps the country supplied with enough Kfir jets and other military hardware to keep the war going. Absolute forgetfulness on L.K.'s part of course.

Next, Arafat pulls out a pistol from under his olive green attire, and waves it around, when Chandrika referred to him as a man of peace who does not carry a gun any more. Embarassed laughter all round - at the banqueting table. There was enough gun-waving in the country,without Arafat himself adding to the bedlam.

Next, Chandrika embarasses Arafat by introducing PLOT's leader Dharmalingam Siddharthan (whose father, the TULF M.P. was gunned down by another Chandrika ally, the TELO). She said:

"He was trained by you, but now he is with me". Like saying "nice doggie, isn't he? But Arafat disclaimed any responsibility, to which the PLOT man says that he spent three weeks in Lebanon watching the training given to PLOT cadres. Embarrassed laughter all round.

As some cynic observed: The sight of Chandrika and Siddharthan eating at the same table is enough to make anyone draw out a gun!

Sri Lanka's 4th Constitution

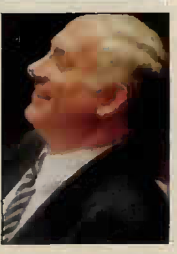
Sri Lanka government made public the draft of a new constitution on March 26 which changes the executive presidency into a titular head of state and strenthening the powers of the Parliament.

The republic of Sri Lanka will be an "indissoluble union of regions. No regional administration shall attempt to directly or indirectly promote or advocate separation or secession",

The draft however omits the vital chapter dealing with the devolution of powers.

"What They Say"

International



"Bibi Netanyahu is a dangerous man for the state of Israel. I do not believe one word that leaves that man's mouth"

- Ariel Sharon, Israel's Infrastructure Minister, quoted telling a group of Israeli settlers.

* * * * *

,,if I had to do a job other than practising medicine, it would be taxi driving. There's good money in taxis".

- Kurdish refugee in Sydney, Syrus Razaghipour who drives a taxi, because his Iranian medical degree is not recognised in Australia.

* * * * *

"General Sani Abacha is a murderer, a psychopath and a very pathological liar who will not hesitate to kill, to imprison, to torture, to kidnap*.

- Exiled playright and Nobel Prize winner Wole Soyinka on Nigeria's military leader

* * * * *

"The plight of our Karen refugees should appeal to the compassion of all right thinking people all over the world".

- Burmese Opposition leader Aung San Suu Kyi, after thousands of them fled to Thailand.

* * * * *

"I want my party to win the next elections, and I will help my party prepare to win. But I don't want to be Prime Minister again".

- Pakistan's ousted Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto in interview with TIME magazine.

* * * * *

"We try very hard to be friends, but sometimes, with Singapore, it is very hard to be friends".

- Malaysian Prime Minister Mahathir Mohammad, after Singapore's Lee Kuan Yew described Johore state in Malaysia as notorious for crime.

* * * * *

"It should be evident to any reader with a basic understanding of finance, that costs of sustaining a population (in Jaffna), civilian or military, by air and sea only, for an indefinite period of time would be astronomical. It is not surprising therefore that the defence budget has escalated by another 10 billion rupees this year, from 38 billion last year and 23 billion in 1994, for the dubious reward of acquisition of real estate, at the expense of many thousands of refugees from the peninsula and Kilinochchi".

- retired Sri Lankan Air Vice Marshal Harry Gunetilleke, writing in the WEEKEND EXPRESS, March 8.

* * * * *

"Unless peace is established in the entire country, this (gun culture in the south) cannot be eradicated. Seizing arms and security measures will not be sufficient to find a lasting solution to the problem of violence. There are thousands of army deserters and others in the country. This will continue until the basic problem is solved and peace is established"

- Cabinet Minister and Ceylon Workers Congress leader S.THONDAMAN IN AN INTERVIEW WITH Weekend Express, March 15.

* * * * *

"You can very clearly say it (the LTTE) is weakened ... definitely we are winning this war... most of the battle with the LTTE is over ... only a little more has to be completely".

- Sri Lankan army commander Lt.Gen.Rohan Daluwatte, in an interview with SUNDAY TIMES, Colombo, 3 days before the LTTE attacked three vital military installations in the East.

* * * * *

"To the Sinhala people, President Premadasa's hands may have been red with the blood of southern youth. But to Tamils, President Chandrika Kumaratunga's hands have more blood on them of Tamil people both in the northeast and outside".

- Tamil writer and poet V.I.S.Jayapalan quoted by columnist Jehan Perera in THE ISLAND, March 16.

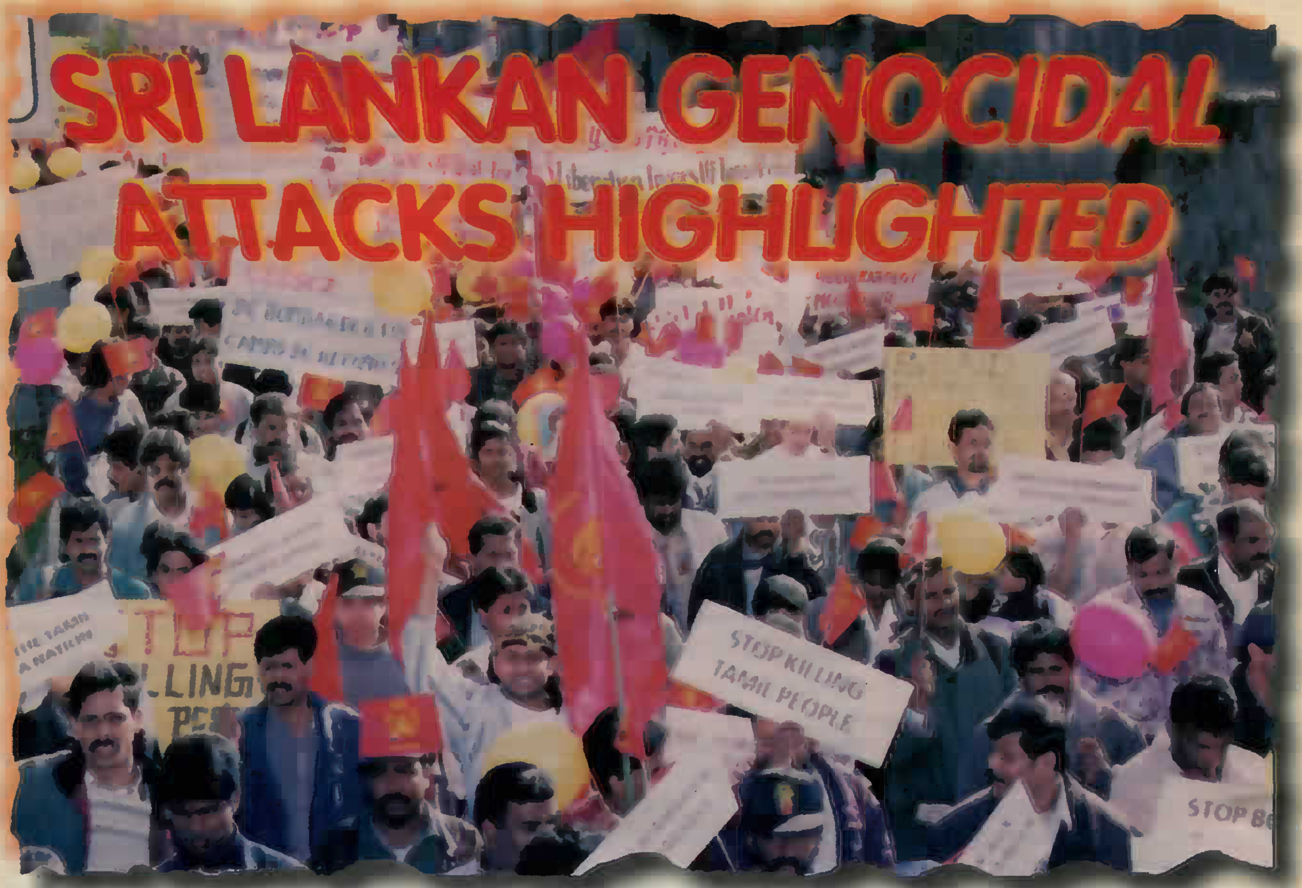
* * * * *

"It was a Sri Lankan Tamil who came to me to learn German in 1986 and I soon learnt about the ethnic war in Sri Lanka and how the people in the North and East were trying desperately to leave the country. They were willing to sell everything, leave everything behind so that they could live without fear".

- Swiss NGO worker Barbara Frei, on a visit to Sri Lanka, speaking to Pearl Thevanayagam of the WEEKEND EXPRESS, March 8.

* * * * *

SRI LANKAN GENOCIDAL ATTACKS HIGHLIGHTED



An estimated eight to ten thousand Tamils and supporters of the Tamil Eelam struggle marched from the centre of Geneva through crowded streets to the United Nations Headquarters at the Place de la Nations, on 17 March. The slogans and placards included the following: UN: Condemn Sri Lanka's Genocidal War on Tamils, Sri Lanka Army: Quit Tamil Homeland, and Foreign Aid to Sri Lanka Feeds war against Tamils. The march ended with a rally before the United Nations. The rally was addressed by Nadarajah Muralidharan, LTTE representative in Switzerland, Mr.Kumar Ponnambalam, and by delegates from Denmark, Germany and London, amongst others. An appeal by the Swiss Federation of Tamil Associations was presented by the non governmental organisations, Pax Christi and International Educational Development to the President of the UN Commission on Human Rights and to the United Nations Centre for Human Rights. The appeal called upon the Commission to express the revulsion of the international community at the genocidal actions of President Chandrika Kumaratunga's Sri Lanka government. The Swiss Federation of Tamil Associations urged the Commission to call upon Sri Lanka to stop the genocide and withdraw its occupying army from the Tamil homeland. Under the Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide, acts of murder committed with intent to

(Overleaf)

At the Press Conference: (left to right). Ms.A.Fankhauser, M.P., (Berne Parliament), Rev. Dr.S.J.Emmanuel, Mr.G.G.Ponnambalam(Jr.), and Ms. Deirdre McConnell.

Mr. Nadarajah Muralitharan, LTTE representative in Switzerland (right) speaking at the UN Human Rights Commission meeting.

destroy, in whole or in part, a national, ethnical, racial or religious group as such are considered as acts of genocide. The fact of the murder and rape of Tamils, of torture and grave attacks on their physical and mental integrity and of the subjection of the group to conditions leading necessarily to their deaths are clearly proven by the evidence. Furthermore, the Commander in Chief of the Sri Lanka armed forces, President Chandrika Kumaratunga and the Sri Lanka government have celebrated the genocidal onslaught at victory ceremonies evoking memories of earlier conquests of the Tamil people by Sinhala kings. They have failed to investigate the genocidal acts committed by their armed forces and para military agencies. They have refrained from intervening to prevent the slaughter. Their attitude amounts to incitement to crime and criminal negligence and must be judged as severely as the crimes actively committed by those under their command.

Amongst the panelists at a well attended press conference before the march, were Ms.A.Frankhauser, Member of the Swiss National Parliament and Committee Member of the Socialist Party, Kumar Ponnamblam, General Secretary of the All Ceylon Tamil Congress, Rev.Father D.J. Emmanuel, and Ms.Deirdre McConnell, Human Rights Activist. Ms.Frankhauser expressed her solidarity with the Tamil struggle for freedom. She said the actions taken by the Swiss authorities against Nadarajah Muralidharan, the LTTE representative in Switzerland, were a violation of international human rights. In answer to a question about the allegation that Tamils in Switzerland were being 'forced' to contribute funds to the LTTE she replied: "This is a general charge made against freedom struggles by those who are opposed to them. The truth is that the allegation against the LTTE is without any foundation."

Mr.Kumar Ponnambalam said that Tamil youths were being arbitrarily and illegally arrested and gave several specific instances. He added: "That the Sri Lanka government is motivated by malafides and has therefore much to hide from the outside world is shown by the prohibition on media personnel to North-East - except, ofcourse, on conducted tours."

Rev.Father Emmanuel said that he belonged to no political party but he was both a victim of and a witness to the genocidal attack launched by Sri Lanka on the Tamil people. He recounted the church bombings and the exodus of thousands of Tamils from their homes that he had witnessed. He said that the oppression of the Tamil people by successive Sinhala governments had started long before the birth of the LTTE. **"The Liberation Tigers and the armed resistance of the Tamil people were the result of decades of oppressive rule. The LTTE was not the cause of Sinhala oppression. It was the result."**

Ms.Deirdre McConnell said that foreign aid to Sri Lanka feeds the genocidal war against the Tamil people. Sri Lanka's outside propaganda was very different to the harsh internal reality of military suppression in the Tamil homeland. "Sri Lanka's prohibition and restrictions on the media go far beyond any reasonable demands of national security - they help to hide the rape, torture and extra judicial killings from the public gaze".

(See also page 28)

RECONNAISSEZ LE PEUPLE
TAMOUL EN TANT
STOP

-North-East Diary / March '97-

TAMIL-MUSLIM BOND IRKS MILITARY

The LTTE's political head in Batticaloa-Amparai has issued a statement outlining the reasons why the Sri Lankan military has been anxiously trying to stoke tension between Tamils and Muslims in the East. The statement, which accompanied Tamil-Muslim talks, on February 27 said there was mounting discomfort among military circles about growing affinity between Tamils and Muslims and frantic efforts were being made by Sri Lanka to sabotage this. In the past few months a number of provocative incidents have been 'staged' by military forces to try and generate disharmony. Most recently, Sri Lanka shelled a Muslim village and immediately put out word it was the work of the LTTE. Similar stage-managed incidents can be expected in the future as empathy between Tamils and Muslims in the East continues to strengthen. The LTTE's political head emphasised the need for Tamils and Muslims to work together to withstand these sinister efforts and continue building on the strong friendship that exists at present

TRAINING CENTRE OPENS IN VANNI

The LTTE administration in Vanni - with the financial assistance of the Tamils Rehabilitation Organisation (TRO) and Akkarayan Development Society - opened a work-training centre in Akkarayan. The centre, which opens tomorrow, will help residents of the area to develop useful work-skills which it is hoped can lead to gainful employment. In addition to militarily resisting Sri Lankan occupation of traditional Tamil lands the LTTE also makes every effort to plan for the future well-being of the Tamil nation.

LTTE HELPS MANNAR FARMERS

The LTTE with the assistance of the Tamil Eelam Economic Development Organisation (TEEDOR) has issued fruit seeds and plants to Tamil farmers in Mannar. The distribution of 1240 fruit plants in places like Madhu, Adampan, Pallamadhu and Nanaddan will help strengthen the economy of Tamil Eelam.

5 TAMILS MISSING : ONE FOUND TORTURED

One of five Tamils who went missing after arrest by the Sri Lankan army in Puttur last month has been found tortured to death. His body was lying in the Jaffna hospital mortuary on March 4 bearing all the scars of the torture which ultimately killed him. The five men had been arrested on Feburary 10 during a vicious army round-up operation. Irate soldiers herded masses of Tamil residents together in an open field and beat them with iron rods and rifle butts, killing three and critically injuring six. They then took a number of people away. The missing are Pappa Sathananthan (27), Saravanai Nadarasa (43), Sinnathamby Paramanathan (30) and Manikkam Rasavel (26), all from Puttur East. The tortured man, also from Puttur East, is Sellan Manoharan (21). The missing four are presumed dead.

Torture and disappearances occur on a regular basis in army-occupied Tamil areas. Men, women and children fear venturing outside their homes. But even their homes are not safe. The Sri Lankan army routinely orders people outside and subjects them to humiliating rituals.

ARMY RAVAGES PADDY LANDS

It is apparent that Sri Lankan military operations are timed to cause as much damage to Tamil crops as possible. Operation Edibala destroyed 12,500 acres of the finest paddy lands while military operations in Batticaloa are geared towards the same end, causing deep anguish among farmers. What is beyond doubt is that Sri Lanka's military policy is directed not at the LTTE in particular but at crippling the Tamil nation in general, for as long as the international community is prepared to tolerate it. Meanwhile in Pooneryn, which became free last year after 5 years of military occupation, the harvest was good. Much army-ravaged land has been restored by local cultivators giving residents of the area some respite.

CREATING DRUG HABIT IN DETENTION CAMPS

Many of the thousands of Tamil travellers imprisoned in Vavuniya's army detention camps are being coerced by Sri Lankan forces into taking hard drugs. The military's sudden encouragement of drug-taking among the inmates of these camps - particularly the young - is intended to demoralise them and sap their energies while creating a generation which is dependent on the Sinhala forces to supply their habit. The "Goods Shed" detention centre (Vavuniya) is a case in point where young girls and boys can be seen heavily under the influence of narcotics. It is a tragic sight which shows just how far the government is willing to hurt the Tamils in order to rule them. The detainees have committed no crime yet for months have been cramped in inhuman conditions to stop them travelling to other parts of the

-North-East Diary / March '97-

island. The Sri Lankan government and media ignores their plight even though women, elderly people and children are experiencing the most appalling conditions. The relevant international bodies have done nothing to highlight the crisis nor applied any meaningful pressure on Sri Lanka though officials have been aware of the scale of the humanitarian disaster for a long time. Sri Lanka has used this inaction to push its repression of the Tamil population to new extremes..

NEW LIBRARY FOR MULLAITIVU

A new library has been opened in Visvamadhu (Mullaitivu) stocking thousands of books in English and Tamil. The library was shifted from its former location at Kondavil (Jaffna) when Sri Lankan military forces occupied Jaffna one and a half years ago. The books were quickly dismantled and transported to Vanni which remains LTTE-administered.

SPORTS FESTIVAL FOR ORPHANS

The annual sports meet for children whose parents have been killed by Sri Lankan forces took place in Kantharupan sports ground (in Tamil Vanni). Mr Ramesappa, head of the Kantharupan education centre, presided over the LTTE-sponsored event.

TAMIL EELAM BUS SERVICE

The LTTE administration has set up a bus service linking Mullaitivu to the rest of Tamil Vanni. The buses run twice a day and will pass through Puthukudiyiruppu, Kumulamunnai, Pokkanai and Maththalan. Mullaitivu, which was just recently restored to LTTE control, is finally getting back on its feet again after years of army neglect.

TWO HOSPITALS DEMOLISHED

The Murunkan provincial hospital and Nanaddan central hospital - both situated along the Vavuniya-Mannar road - have been forced to close permanently after being bombed to ruins by Sri Lankan forces. Staff at the two hospitals fled along with residents to nearby refugee camps which remain overcrowded and inadequately supplied. Meanwhile the hospitals of Silavathurai, Marichchukaddy, Thiruketheesvaram and Periamadhu have been lying desolate for ages due to earlier Sri Lankan military operations.

WOMEN ARRESTED WITH MEDICINE

Two Tamil women have been arrested by Sri Lankan troops for trying to take medicines into the Tamil Vanni region. The two women were stopped at the dreaded Thandikulam military checkpoint - gateway to the Vanni - after soldiers searched their vegetable baskets and found medicines. Sri Lanka has in place a medical embargo to Tamil areas not under army rule. Even though Tamils living in Vanni depend on medical supplies from outside, the government has cut off all routes for receiving them. The health situation in Vanni has become so desperate that people - like these two women - are driven to take extreme risks to get medicines to their people across military checkpoints. The medical ban remains a military tactic hoped to diminish the Tamil population through illness and break their resistance to military occupation

PADAVIYA ARMY POST ATTACKED

Five Sri Lankan soldiers were killed on March 4 when the LTTE simultaneously attacked an army post and a roadblock at Padaviya, east of Vavuniya. Sri Lankan troops fled from the scene without resistance leaving the dead behind. The LTTE suffered no casualities and captured rifles, pistols and other accessories. The Padaviya positions attacked were part of a string of army camps strategically placed by Sri Lanka to create a physical barrier between northern Tamil territories and eastern ones. Tamils of the area had been forcibly evicted and Sinhala colonies installed in their place so that the Tamil nation's historical homeland would be obscured. Sri Lanka has implemented a policy of Sinhala colonisation for decades.

STARVATION & SLOW GENOCIDE

Almost 400,000 Tamils in the island's east are on the brink of starvation following the Chandrika government's denial of food relief to 12 divisions of the Batticaloa district. The area's Tamil population in the past relied on food stamps issued by the government but these have been strategically withdrawn. The situation has been engineered by the Sri Lankan government in the knowledge

-North-East Diary / March '97-

that the LTTE cannot be defeated. The Chandrika government has realised that the only hope of occupying the northeast is by exterminating the Tamil population through a variety of covert measures.

The genocide of the Tamil people of the northeast has now - unequivocally - become the main pillar of Sri Lanka's military strategy. In all areas of Sri Lankan military operations, Tamil rice fields are being scorched, food supplies cut and medicines withheld. It is a wait-and-see approach which will continue for as long as the international community remains blinded. The government's so-called devolution package, on which much international confidence is based, is a ruse intended to buy more time to continue its genocide.

Evidence of this is mounting despite the government's ban on independent journalists to the northeast. Since January this year the ICRC was stopped from carrying food to the residents of Vaharai (Batticaloa). The 17,000 people there have been without any food for over two months.

RELATIVES TURNED AWAY

The relatives of 27 Tamil youths who 'disappeared' after being arrested by Sri Lankan soldiers last July have been turned away by military authorities at every camp in occupied-Jaffna. The standard response is that no such persons were arrested, although many witnesses insist otherwise. The young men were taken away from Thatchanthoppu and Navatkuli during a massive cordon and search operation last year and have not been seen since. In the light of many similar disappearances since the military occupation of Jaffna, there is a high likelihood that these people have been tortured and killed.

VAVUNATHIVU CAMP THE FULL DETAILS

The Sri Lankan defence ministry yesterday issued false details of the LTTE attack on an army camp at Vavunativu on the March. This is what happened:

At 1.05 Thursday morning LTTE units launched a major offensive on the strategic Vavunathivu army camp in Batticaloa district. The camp housed 300 members of the Sri Lankan army and formed part of the military's forward defence lines protecting its main camp in Batticaloa town. After six hours of heavy fighting Sri Lankan troops fled leaving LTTE to take over and demolish the camp. LTTE captured much hi-tech equipment including a 50-calibre gun. A rescue effort from Batticaloa's main army camp ended in disaster for Sri Lankan troops. A connecting bridge to the captured base was blasted as soldiers tried to make their way across and the remaining troops came under intense fire from LTTE units. Sri Lankan military casualties in this failed rescue bid are significant, though exact figures were not discernible.

Consequently, Sri Lankan Puccara bombers, MI24's and Bell helicopter-gunships arrived on the scene to launch air-strikes against LTTE fighters at the captured camp. However, these fighter-planes were swiftly driven away by LTTE retaliatory fire and did not subsequently return.

There followed persistent shelling of the LTTE-captured camp from two army positions - Batticaloa's nearby military airbase and Kommanthurai. LTTE fighters returned fire at the airbase and resultant troop casualties are presumed high. In the entire incident LTTE casualties amounted to 84, including the death of Lt Col. Mathana (commander of the Batticaloa-Amparai women's' brigade) and Lt. Col. Palendra (commander of the Vinodhan brigade).

CHINA BAY AIRBASE DEMOLISHED

LTTE forces have largely destroyed Sri Lanka's most heavily fortified airbase located in the island's eastern district of Trincomallee. The attack launched on March 5 night also effectively destroyed a Y-12 aircraft and two anti-aircraft guns. A unit of Black Tigers penetrated the maximum-security China Bay base at around midnight killing several airforce personnel and blasting away a major portion of the compound. The base - located at the nerve-centre of Sri Lanka's military operations - remains out of action for the moment. Three LTTE soldiers died in the operation: Major Sittampalam, Captain Nivethan and Captain Vijayaruban.

SIVARATHTHIRI DISRUPTED

Sri Lankan airforce planes on the 6th and 7th of this month flew several sorties over selected Tamil areas where overnight Hindu celebrations were taking place. The Maha Sivarathri celebrations require Hindus all over the world to stay awake throughout the night in temples. Warplanes and helicopter gunships charged over Jaffna and parts of the Vanni region with the intention of distracting worshippers who were engaged in their devotional practices. Tamils in the northeast are mainly Hindus. The Sri Lankan military is comprised of Sinhala-Buddhists.

-North-East Diary / March '97-

100's ARRESTED, ONLY 20 RELEASED

Hundreds of Tamils on Thursday were rounded up on 6 March by the army in the village of Manalthivu (Puttalam). They were made to stand for hours in the scorching heat at the St Anthony church grounds while soldiers ransacked their homes. Hundreds were later taken away for interrogation. Only 20 have been released.

VAVUNATHIVU : ARMY REPRISALS

Predictably, Sri Lankan forces began retaliating against Tamil civilians after their defeat at Vavunathivu army camp on 6 March. Army Brigadier Sarath Munasinghe has ordered troops to shell the eastern Tamil villages of Eravur, Aiyankerni, Senkalady, Kommanthurai and Vallaieravu. Four civilians have been killed while eight others - including a 3 year old girl - have been critically injured. A rice mill has also been obliterated by the barrage. People from these villages have shifted to other areas.

TRINCO: 3000 INTERROGATED

A staggering 3000 Tamils of all ages were herded together in Trincomalee under the orders of the Sri Lankan army and navy there. All were body-searched before being individually interrogated by the massive contingent of military personnel. All the body searches were carried out by male soldiers in what became a humiliating and degrading ordeal, especially for the women and young girls. The incident - which took place at the Vivekananda sports grounds in Urarmalai - lasted the entire day.

MILITARY TERROR IN JAFFNA

'NO GATHERINGS WITHOUT MY APPROVAL' SAYS COL. VIJAYARATNE

The military officer in charge of Vadamaradchy, Colonel Vijayaratne, has declared at a public meeting that the Sinhala army is here "by virtue of military conquest." He went on to warn all government employees in the district that they must keep the Sinhala lion-flag hoisted at all times in offices - especially on important days - and that proper respect should be paid to it. Local government appointees were then instructed not to participate in any public functions without obtaining written permission from him first. Not even school events are to take place without his presence, he said. Personal invitations should be made to him and events can only proceed after his arrival at the schools' premises. The military dictatorship in Jaffna is becoming increasingly harsh. But these disturbing facts will not be reported by the Sri Lankan media who are not allowed by the government to enter Jaffna. The government knows that should the reality of army rule in captured Tamil territory become known internationally, tolerance of its war strategy would wane.

JAFFNA PRIEST HANGS HIMSELF

The Hindu priest of a Jaffna temple has committed suicide on the premises after failing to trace his brother who was arrested last week by the Sri Lankan army. His brother - also a priest of the Meesalai Vellaimavady Ganesh Temple - was arrested on frivolous charges as part of the Sinhala-Buddhist army's routine harassment of the Hindu clergy. But when the priest went to all the army camps to search for his brother his enquiries and pleas were typically shrugged off by military officials. Convinced that his brother had by now been murdered by soldiers the priest hanged himself inside the temple. Sri Lankan brigadier Janaka Perera who was formerly in command of Jaffna once promised the Hindu clergy that they would not face harassment from Sinhala armed forces. But since the occupation of Jaffna Hindu temples have often faced the brunt of soldiers' venom.

HALF A MILLION DISPLACED

The Sri Lankan government has left half a million displaced Tamils in the Vanni without food for nearly two months in what is a blatant contravention of international humanitarian law. International relief agencies including UNHCR and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) have not yet raised this matter to the wider international community. Military authorities at Thandikulam barrier - the only entrance point for food to the Vanni region - are not allowing any dry rations through to the hundreds of thousands of Tamils who have been displaced by successive Sri Lankan military operations. A dangerous and unprecedented situation is developing. Thousands of Tamils are literally on the verge of starvation. In the month of January a trickle of food was permitted into Vanni but even this fell 200 lorries short of the minimum requirement estimated by the ministry for rehabilitation. Since February, however, not a single lorry containing food for the displaced has crossed the Thandikulam check-

-North-East Diary / March '97-

point. With more Sri Lankan military operations imminent the displaced civilian population is expected to rise further, exacerbating the humanitarian crisis. Independent journalists are prevented from entering these areas which has effectively stopped the international community becoming alerted.

MASKED INFORMERS

A massive round-up and search operation took place in Varani, Thenmaradchy (in the Jaffna peninsula). Hundreds of army personnel are said to have moved in on the area with 'masked informers' on hand to select residents for arrest and punishment. A contingent of government-backed Tamil militia - derided locally as the "gang of five" - is also participating in the round-up. Terror has gripped locals who are somewhat familiar with the procedure. Most residents - which includes small children - have already been led to an open field. According to ritual, the masked 'informers' will later walk along the parade of people. A simple nod of the head is enough to incriminate someone and lead to their arrest. Masked informers were used by the Sri Lankan army during the JVP uprising in the south of the country. Even then, these 'informers' had to accuse a regular quota of people to avoid being suspected themselves of letting people get away.

Meanwhile, the ritual rounding-up and interrogation of Tamils in this archaic fashion ought to prompt foreign diplomats and observers to reconsider their patience with Sri Lanka's military strategy. Indeed, it is disturbing the extent to which the international community seems to have adjusted to this state of affairs as 'normal' and tolerable.

FRIENDLY FIRE : 3 SOLDIERS DIE

Three Sri Lankan soldiers have been killed by their own forces while they were attending to one of their roadblocks at the Imayanan-Vilunthanady road (Vadamaradchy). A passing Sri Lankan patrol opened fire on the men in a fit of panic thinking they were LTTE members.

WOMEN'S BODIES BY THE ROADSIDE

Two Tamil women in their early twenties have been found gunned down on a roadside in Vavuniya within range of the Sri Lankan army camp. The bodies of Kumaraswamy Sujitha (aged 24) and Mekanathan Jeyasutha (aged 22) were sighted on the Vavuniya Town Road, close to the camp. Sujitha was originally from Neervelly North (Jaffna) while Jeyasutha was from Rampaikulam (Vavuniya). Several more bullet-struck bodies have been discovered in army-controlled Vavuniya in the past two weeks.

BATTI. PRISONERS ON DEATH-FAST

Three Tamil men held in Batticaloa jail began a fast-unto-death on 10 March to protest their imprisonment without trial. They are among thousands of Tamils throughout the island being detained in this manner. The situation is particularly disturbing in Batticaloa. Even married Tamil women with children can be seen languishing behind bars without the prospect of release or trial. Sinhala military officials remain remarkably immune to the tragedy, not treating such cases with any degree of seriousness. Such is the indignity Tamils are expected to just put up with. Pleas to the Attorney General routinely go unheeded and the jails are getting fuller as more and more innocent Tamils become deprived of their basic human liberties. Those who have engaged in the death-fast are - P. Uthayaraj, M. Kokulan and T. Balakrishnan.

DAY-LONG ASSAULT ON MULLAITIVU

Sri Lanka on 13 March launched co-ordinated military strikes on residential areas of Mullaitivu killing many civilians, destroying homes and creating yet another flow of refugees. The attack - using air, ground and naval forces - terrorised coastal and interior Tamil villages for a full 8 hours. Residents were reeling in shock from the ferocity of the onslaught.

It began at 5.30 in the morning with long- and medium- range artillery fire targeted at ordinary villages. Later, navy gunboats in the eastern seas fired cannons directly at coastal settlements which house mainly Tamil fishing families. Most homes between Alampil and Challai - on the north-eastern coast - have been damaged beyond repair. The renowned St. Vellankanni Catholic Church has also been blasted to rubble.

There has been an exodus of people - joining the swelling ranks of the Vanni displaced - clambering to safer places inland, mainly Uduppukulam, Kumulamunai, Thaneerutu and Mulliyawallai. An array of devastated fishing villages meanwhile lie deserted.

Air attacks on the interior began at 7.30am. Puccaras dropped bombs and unleashed rockets on selected civilian concentrations then ran another sortie

-North-East Diary / March '97-

at 12.15pm. Kfirs accomplished the same mission first at 8.00am and again at 10.55am.

The firing from all quarters was relentless the whole day with Mullaitivu treated effectively as a 'free-strike zone'. The scene among the people was one of unbridled panic and disorder. People are still visibly shaken with many children badly traumatised.

The government's official claim of targeting LTTE bases is totally false. Each and every target struck has been a civilian one. This could quite easily be verified were Sri Lanka to permit journalists to the north.

Many civilians all over Mullaitivu have lost their lives and a great many have received severe injuries in what amounts to a cynical move calculated to help the government win upcoming local elections by pointing to an apparent military 'success'. The political strategies that underlie such military operations proves, if anything, the perverse immunity Sri Lanka has to the suffering of Tamils. It is a government consistently willing to buy Sinhala votes with Tamil people's blood.

RIGHTS IGNORED BY OCCUPYING ARMY

Tamils in occupied territories are being denied their full rights, even those rights which pertain to the present 'emergency regulations'. By law, arrest and detention under emergency regulations must be followed by official notice to next-of-kin regarding the person detained. Sri Lankan armed forces in practice never observe this rule and Tamils are helpless to alter this situation. Detainees are also supposed to be handed over to the nearest police station within 24 hours but this rule too is not observed by the occupying forces.

HRTF ADMITS 650 DISAPPEARANCES

An official of the government's own Human Rights Task Force (HRTF), Nalinda Indathissa, has acknowledged the 'disappearance' of at least 650 Tamils from army-controlled Jaffna. While the HRTF remains a token body set up chiefly to assuage the international community, and though it has itself come in for severe criticism from international bodies for its gross ineffectiveness, its admission of so many hundreds of army-related disappearances ought to be an eye-opener about the scale of harassment Tamils are facing in their own land. Indeed, the level of violence against Tamils in the peninsula - including the alarming rate of extra-judicial killings - can no more be dismissed as the work of 'a few bad apples' in the military. It is a systematic brutalisation of the population which only those living through it can properly appreciate. Even journalists who might wish to report independently on the real ground situation are turned away by the government which knows that the truth would astound and horrify the international community. That is why for a year and a half since the military's occupation of Jaffna Sri Lanka has still not permitted journalists free travel to captured areas.

TAMIL VILLEGE ANNEXED

A prominent Tamil organisation - the Tamil Mahasangam - is protesting against Sri Lanka's plan to make the eastern Tamil village of Alaiadivempu an annexe of the now mainly-Sinhala Amparai district. The re-demarcation plan follows a long-standing government tradition of land-grabbing from Tamil people only to gradually evict them and replace them with Sinhalese settlers. Indeed, the district of Amparai was itself a wholly Tamil area before successive Sinhala colonisation schemes diluted the Tamil population there and made them a minority. The pattern is now well-established, with the routine conversion of Tamil areas into Sinhala ones. Pavatkulam (in Vanni), for instance, has become "Padaviya" (a Sinhala name) while Manal-Aru (Mullaitivu) has become "Weli-Oya"

TAMILS IN VANNI HONOR WAR HEROES

The three LTTE members who died in the China Bay military operation have been remembered with affection by the Tamil people. A mile-long procession marched through the Vanni streets from Sivanakar to Puthukudiyiruppu. Every house along the route had in place a traditional oil lamp as people flocked on both sides of the road to cast flowers onto the moving float upon which was hoisted the portraits of Major Sittampalam, Captain Nivethan and Captain Vijayaruban. The three had together penetrated what was thought to be the impregnable defences of the China Bay airforce base, successfully destroying an aircraft and much of the compound.

At the end of the procession, a public tribute took place at Puthukudiyiruppu at which LTTE political representatives Mr. Ilayavan and Mr Vasanthan were present. Mr Para, head of judicial administration for the region, addressed the gathering.

Meanwhile, respects were paid by Tamil people in the east to those LTTE fighters who died in the recent over-

-North-East Diary / March '97-

running of Vavunathivu army camp (Batticaloa). Friday saw all schools, shops and offices in Waharai, Karadiyanaru, Vavunathivu and Kokkadichenai closed and certain boat services halted. Special poojas and prayers were also held at Hindu temples all over the Tamil regions.

TAMIL GUNMEN IN GOVT. PAY

Armed members of the pro-government Tamil party PLOTE are regularly engaging with Sri Lankan armed forces in violent round-ups of Tamils in the northeast. Recently, two Tamil civilians were arrested in Eravur by PLOTE cadres and taken to a secret location where they have since 'disappeared'.

Although 'parliamentary' Tamil groups - like PLOTE, EPDP, TELO and EPRLF - profess to be 'democratic' forces a truth not widely known internationally is that the armed militants attached to these parties are under the pay of the Sri Lankan government and engaged in activities which are staunchly anti-democratic.

STUDENTS USED AS ARMY SHIELDS

A Tamil girls' college in Batticaloa has strongly condemned the Sri Lankan army's use of its students and teachers as human shields. The St Vincent's Ladies' College Development Society passed a resolution condemning the widespread practice of seizing Tamils to use them as protective shields against possible military attacks. Male and female students as well as teachers are being taken routinely. They are placed strategically around army checkpoints to provide cover to soldiers. The practice has created much distress amongst the student population.

PARENTS GET GIRLS BODIES

The bodies of two Tamil girls - Sujitha and Jeysutha - found dead on a Vavuniya roadside near an army camp have been released to their parents to perform last rites. Both the girls were inmates of the Vavuniya detention centres operated by the Sri Lankan military. Sujitha and Jeysutha had been on their way to Colombo, where their parents live. Soldiers had taken them away from the camp earlier and the girls were only seen again as corpses dumped on the roadside. Sri Lankan soldiers sometimes employ this 'dumping' tactic to intimidate local Tamil people.

JAFFNA-THE IMAGE AND THE REALITY

Returning from a visit to army-held Jaffna the government agent for Kilinochchi, Mr Thillainadarasa, has spoken honestly about his experiences. Nothing at all moves, he said, without the army's permission. The military dominates the scene. "Their presence is overwhelming," he continued, adding that people's mobility is severely curtailed by networks of checkpoints and high earth-walls which trail for miles sealing off one area from another. According to Mr Thillainadarasa entry into Jaffna town is possible only through one point - Thattatheru junction - since an army-erected wall completely encircles the ancient Tamil city. A strict curfew has been imposed since the army occupation, Mr Thillainadarasa admits. It begins at 7pm and ends at 6 the next morning.

Jaffna - the government told the world one and a half years ago - has been liberated by the Sinhala armed forces. The evident reality is that Tamil people have become imprisoned in their own land by a foreign army.

TAMIL GUNMEN IN JAFFNA HOSPITAL

Government-backed Tamil gunmen belonging to PLOTE and EPRLF have occupied Jaffna Teaching Hospital and set up their offices there, rendering the medical faculty out of bounds. The Sri Lankan government promotes these Tamil quisling groups - PLOTE, TELO, EPRLF, EPDP and a government-backed splinter group of EROS - internationally as the "true" representatives of the Tamil people.

These pro-government Tamil groups were responsible for the murders of many Tamil people though it was impossible to determine the precise number due to the secrecy with which these groups operated. An Amnesty International country report on Sri Lanka (1996) confirms this, citing routine human rights violations against Tamil civilians including extra-judicial executions, disappearances, torture and arbitrary arrests and detentions.

LTTE WOMEN'S JOURNAL OUT

The official journal of the LTTE's women's division - titled "Suthanthira Paravaigal" - is now out. This latest issue covers a range of analytical articles not only on military matters such as the role of women forces on the battlefield (as in the recent Vavunathivu battle) but also includes features of more general interest to the discerning reader.

DECEMBER NEWS VIDEO RELEASED

Tamil Eelam's latest monthly newsreel of events has been released to the general public. The period covered is December 1996. The video covers all developments in Tamil Eelam ranging from major cultural events to updates on the war against the Sri Lankan military, which is occupying parts of the Tamil country.

Sri Lanka Happenings

5-MEMBER HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION APPOINTED

A Human Rights Commission (HRC) comprising five distinguished citizens of Sri Lanka was inaugurated at a brief ceremony held at the Presidential Secretariat on Monday. The Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Prof. G.L. Peiris represented the President at the ceremony held at the Presidential Secretariat to mark the occasion. The HRC has been made possible by the Human Rights Commission of Sri Lanka Act No.21 of 1996 which has been brought into operation by the President on 17th March 1997, by an Order made under Section 1 of the said Act and published in the Gazette. The appointments to the five-member HRC have been made by President Chandrika Bandaranaike Kumaratunga and include Mr. **O.S.M. Seneviratna**, Retired Judge of the Supreme Court appointed as Chair of the HRC, **Dr. A.T. Ariyaratna** - President of the "Sarvodaya Shramadana Movement" and winner of the Gandhi International Peace Prize, **Prof. Arjuna Aluwihare** - former Chairman of the University Grants Commission and Professor of Surgery at the University of Peradeniya, **Mr. T. Suntharalingam** - retired Judge of the High Court, and **Mr. Ahmed Javid Yusuf** - currently Sri Lanka's Ambassador in Saudi Arabia.

The Commission is vested with wide ranging monitoring functions in respect of executive and administrative practices and procedures. It is also vested with investigative functions to inquire into complaints regarding the infringement or imminent infringement of fundamental rights and where appropriate, to provide for their resolution by mediation and conciliation. The Commission is also required to discharge advisory functions in formulating legislation and administrative directives and procedures and recommendations to the Government to ensure that national laws and administrative practices are in accordance with international human rights norms and standards and promoting awareness of and providing education in relation to fundamental rights. The legislation enables not only an aggrieved person or a person acting on behalf of an aggrieved person to make complaints to the Commission but also to enable groups of persons to make complaints.

Another key provision in the legislation is the requirement to report to the Commission all arrests or detentions under the Emergency or the Prevention of Terrorism Act within 48 hours from the time of such arrest or detention, wilful omission to report such arrest or detention to the Commission would attract the penal sanctions under the Act. This is a salutary provision to safeguard against arbitrary arrests and detentions. The Commission, once it becomes operational, is expected to subsume the work of existing Ad-Hoc bodies such as the Human Rights Task Force q

Ferreting out illegal firearms

The Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Prof. G.L. Peiris told a special press conference that stringent emergency regulations will be gazetted soon to ferret out unauthorised guns and firearms. He further added that emergency regulations are now being drafted to tighten the existing laws and facilitate their implementation. The new regulations will provide for a mandatory minimum sentence of seven years rigorous imprisonment. Currently no minimum sentence is stated in the law and the judge is conferred the discretion to decide on the sentence. The maximum is twenty years rigorous imprisonment.

The new regulations will also take away from the judge the discretion to grant bail to the suspect, and bail will be denied during the entire trial. Prof. Peiris added that while a building or a vehicle in which the unauthorised guns or firearm is found will also be made liable for confiscation, the onus of proving that the person had no knowledge that the gun or firearm was in the building or vehicle will be shifted to the owner. While the danger caused by the proliferation of unlicensed guns and firearms has been causing widespread concern since the assassination of the Ratnapura Member of Parliament, Nalanda Ellawala, the mounting incidence of violence since nominations day for the 21st March Local Government Elections has heightened that concern in the Government.

Prof. Peiris added that the resort to emergency regulations is being made due to the urgency of the situation, and that the new regulations will be later incorporated into the normal law of the country through amendments to the existing laws.

Shooting & Abduction

UNP MP Hapangama was produced before a Colombo Magistrate on March 14 in connection with a shooting incident at Kelaniya in Colombo suburbs, where PA candidate Cecil Wickramasinghe was shot and seriously injuried. Earlier in the week, an Opposition candidate for the Colombo suburb of Maharagama, Harsshini Vithana, was abducted.

Sri Lanka Happenings

Top Police officer suspected of lending uniform to Tigers

Mithra Ariyasing the, Sri Lanka's Deputy Inspector General of Police has been suspended from duty after his wife lent an old uniform to a Tamil woman doctor based in the United States. The uniform was found in the doctor's baggage by a Customs officer at Colombo's airport on March 12.

The doctor whose name was not revealed is reported to be a US passport holder. She had told the police that she had borrowed the uniform for a fancy dress party at the Sri Lankan embassy in Washington on Sinhala and Tamil New Year Day which is celebrated in mid-April.

But the customs officers suspected that she was smuggling the uniform to the Tamil Tigers. The woman doctor was taken into custody and statements were recorded from the police officer and his wife.

Mithra Ariyasinghe, who is No.2 in the police hierarchy was tipped to become the Police chief when the present incumbent retires.

Gangsters rob Tamil rail commuters

A gang of criminals posing off as police C.I.D officers had checked the luggage of a Tamil family travelling by train from Vavuniya to Colombo, forced them to get off at Gampaha station, taken them to Asgiriya jungles, threatened them at the point of a knife, and robbed their jewellery worth over Rs.50,000 and cash Rs.26,000.They were then given Rs.100 as transport expenses to get back to their home in Colombo.

The victims were Mrs.R.Pushpalatha and members of her family living at Gunananda Mawatha, Kotahena. The gang is said to have followed the family from Anuradhapura.

Repression of Tamils in south continunes

A 24-year old house-maid in Weeraketiya (in the Sinhala south) has been taken away by Sri Lankan police who without supplying any evidence accuse her of being a member of the LTTE. Meanwhile a Tamil man cycling to work from Kelaniya to Deiyandara, was arrested by Hakmana police. The reason for his arrest was that his gold chain was deemed to be worth significantly more than his bicycle, thereby making him a suspicious character. Put before Matara magistrate's court, he was ordered to be remanded until the end of March.

Vandals destroy Tamil politician's shrine

The altar of Lord Ganesh (Pillayar) embedded in the parapet wall of Tamil Congress General Secretary Kumar Ponnambalam at his Queen's Road residence in Colombo was desecrated and the contents looted by vandals.

According to the complaint made to the police by Mr.Ponnambalam, the vandals had broken down the lock and opened the iron gate of the shrine. They had then attempted to smash the statue which was of sentimental value and specially brought down from Madras. An expensive ceramic lamp had been stolen and other items in the shrine were strewn around the place.

Ponnambalam questioned at Colombo airport

Tamil Congress leader Kumar Ponnambalam and his son were detained and questioned for more than two hours at the BIA by customs and police officers, detectives disclosed yesterday. The Saturday dawn drama took place when the outspoken Tamil leader and his son went for routine customs clearance before emplaning for Geneva to attend an international human rights conference. Detectives said a search team of around 15 customs, police and Air Force security officers found 30 magazines and other documents in Ponnambalams' suitcases and felt those should be examined by high ranking officers. Mr. Ponnambalam and his son who was going to London for a law exam were then told to wait at the Airport till a police superintendent and another officer arrived to further check the material. When the police investigators arrived, the Ponnambalams were taken to a special room where they were questioned for more than 90 minutes. Detectives said Mr. Ponnambalam had been asked from where and from whom he got the magazines and documents. He claimed most of them had come from abroad. After checking the material again the officers decided to hold back four of the magazines, two of which were titled "Give peace a chance in Sri Lanka" and "Tortures in Sri Lanka". Mr. Ponnambalam and his son were allowed to leave with a police officer accompanying them upto the gangway of the Geneva bound flight. Mr. Ponnambalam, a fiery speaker and lawyer is reported to have called a news conference in Geneva yesterday to protest against what happened here.

Panic hits sacred city as soldier goes berserk

Panic gripped Anuradhapura city on March 11morning when a soldier allegedly involved in a lip biting dispute at a brothel went berserk and sprayed the police station with a burst of automatic gunfire killing a woman homeguard and injuring at least 10 police personnel before he himself was gunned down.

It being pension day large numbers of old people had gathered at the Kachcheri opposite the police station. They and hundreds of others including school children fled in fear as the mini battle erupted amidst rumours that the LTTE was attacking the city.

The bloody drama was triggered off by a relatively minor incident involving the soldier and a woman at a nearby brothel over the non payment of some dues. Complaints had been made by both parties to the crimes branch of the police station and the shoot-out took place when the soldier was brought by two army officers yesterday to be handed over to police custody.

But police pointed out they could not take him into custody as he was in uniform and told the officer that the soldier must be brought back in civvies. While they were discussing this the soldier rushed out to an army truck parked outside the station, pulled out an automatic T-56 weapon and started spraying the station with bullets.

A woman homeguard, Mallika Kumari, attached to the CDB section of the station was hit by gunfire and fell dead on the typewriter on which she was typing.

The rest of the policemen, fearing it was an LTTE attack went on top alert taking up positions. But a few of them went charging towards the soldier who was continuing to fire at the station. The soldier then started running as he saw the policemen following him.

After a brief chase through a busy street police opened fire on the soldier and he fell dead, eye witnesses said. Police said they were forced to open fire as they feared the soldier might cause more bloodshed in the area.

The tragedy involving this soldier from the Saliyapura camp, in Anuradhapura was being jointly investigated by the military and police yesterday.

As panic spread among people in the area after the mini battle police teams with loud speakers drove through the streets telling people to calm down as the local incident was now under control.

Later yesterday police said a Health Department driver who was in the premises during the incident had died of a heart attack taking the death toll to three.

Mid week Mirror (12 March)

Woman candidate bites rival at poll meeting

COLOMBO, March 13 (AFP) - A woman candidate at Sri Lanka's forthcoming local council elections pounced on a man and bit him during a meeting to ensure a peaceful vote, a Sinhalese language daily reported.

The woman, a candidate from the ruling People's Alliance, attacked the brother of a fellow candidate at Dankotuwa, 50 kilometres (31.25 miles) north of here on Sunday, the Lankadeepa said. It said the victim was hospitalised after the attack. The woman had bitten his face and hands, the Lankadeepa said.

Police said more than 1,000 poll-related complaints were lodged since nominations closed a month ago for the March 21 local government elections. Candidates from the same party were sometimes attacking each other as part of a battle to win what is known as "preferential votes". The election is conducted on a proportional representation system. Voters can mark their preferences for three candidates of the same party. "So far the big incidents are arson, destruction of property and physical violence," a police spokesman said.

"The main incident was the double murder of a government MP and a bodyguard."

The killing four weeks ago of ruling party legislator Nalanda Ellawela and a police guard by gunmen alleged to be opposition United National Party politicians has fuelled politically motivated attacks across the country.

Man bites Sri Lankan policeman

COLOMBO, March 14 (AFP) - A man who bit a police inspector on the back at a southern town in Sri Lanka has been arrested and remanded until next week, a state-run evening newspaper reported Friday.

The 25-year-old man was taken into custody after he attacked inspector Lakshman Akuretiyage at the town of Ambalangoda, the Observer said, adding the man had been under the influence of liquor. He is to be charged with attacking a police officer and unruly behaviour in a public place, police said.

The Forgotten War in Sri Lanka & the Responsibility of Governments

"Forging an International Consensus for Resolution of a Forgotten War" is the title of a recent report issued by the NGO Forum on Sri Lanka. HOT SPRING brings you a few extracts from the report.

The response of the international community to the dramatic changes in Sri Lanka over the past 12 months has continued to be tempered by the analysis diplomats made immediately after the election of the PA Government in 1994. The international community has continued to cite the Government's commitment to peace and human rights reforms made nearly two years ago. In many instances however, the Government has either failed to implement or followed a course of action that contradicts the original, stated intention of government policy .....

Far from encouraging both sides to return to negotiations, however, some countries such as the United Kingdom have inadvertently promoted a continuation of the war by lifting an embargo on arms sales to the Government. The Forum is convinced that increasing the technological capability or the size of the arsenals deployed by either side will not resolve the conflict.

Whatever the assessment of the current policies of the warring parties, it is clear that the majority of the world's governments have decided, for the time being, to remove Sri Lanka from the international agendas and to relegate the armed conflict to the status of a forgotten war. The result can only be the needless suffering and deaths of more Sri Lankans.

The present Military expenditure of US dollars 629 million is unsustainable. The Government currently has 20,000 troops engaged in the Jaffna peninsula which is roughly one quarter of the army. It should be remembered that the LTTE successfully resisted the much larger Indian Peace Keeping Force contingent of 70,000 troops at its peak in 1990 ....

Report by the NGO Forum on Sri Lanka

Recently the international community has witnessed other efforts to resolve pro- traced internal conflicts around the world. Events in South Africa, the Middle East and Northern Ireland have demonstrated that there is rarely an appropriate moment for peace initiatives but that concerted international action can affect the internal dynamics of such conflicts. For over a decade the international community has provided several hundred million dollars in economic aid and investment for Sri Lanka each year without forging a similar alliance of concerned governments to promote a just resolution of the country's civil war. The NGO Forum on Sri Lanka calls upon the international community to match its economic commitment with a diplomatic initiative to bring about a negotiated settlement of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka.

> **"The NGO Forum on Sri Lanka calls upon the international community to match its economic commitment with a diplomatic initiative to bring about a negotiated settlement of the ethnic conflict in Sri Lanka. . . ."**

The creation of international peace and security is one of the primary responsibilities of governments. This role has been increasingly acknowledged through the operations of the United Nations, regional mechanisms for peaceful cooperation and bilateral agreements designed to foster stability and cooperation. Governments have also worked together to find solutions to internal armed conflicts which may or may not have an international dimension, on the grounds that humanitarian concern transcends geographical, racial and religious boundaries and is one of the global responsibilities which nations accept.

The NGO Forum on Sri Lanka does not play a role which would permit it to prescribe the precise initiatives which governments should take to further the cause of peace in Sri Lanka. Such decisions must rest with governments alone. Indeed, it is governments themselves which are uniquely placed to bring the required expertise and resources to bear in resolving such conflicts. What the Forum does seek is an end to the apparent policy of allowing this debilitating and disastrous war to continue. What is needed is a genuine, energetic and determined effort on the international level to foster the conditions that could bring peace to Sri Lanka.

Japan to slash aid to Sri Lanka

Japan will slash aid to Sri Lanka by 25 percent this year. This was announced by Japanese Embassy officials in Colombo recently.

Although the reason given for the cut was domestic economic problems in the donor nation, political analysts in Colombo believe the move was made for other reasons.

Sugeeswara Senadhira reporting for INDIA ABROAD says:-Analysts say that Tokyo was upset with Colombo's recent decision to reject an offer by a Japanese company to develop Colombo port while allowing a Western company to take over one of the busiest quays at the harbour. Japan is also said to be worried about the safety of Japanese business investments in Sri Lanka in view of the ethnic war.

Sri Lanka will get 300m.dollars in aid from the Japanese government in 1997, 80m.dollars less than last year. This will be the first time there has been a drop in Japanese aid to Sri Lanka which had grown with every year.

Announcing the 30th yen loan package for Sri Lanka, F.Motal, head of a Japanese delegation said that Tokyo was unlikely to clear all the 15 projects proposed by Colombo for Japanese development funding. He refused to give further details.

However, he added that an end to the Tamil insurgency in the northeastern region could lead to more Japanese aid being pumped into Sri Lanka for the reconstruction of the Northern and Eastern provinces. He said that the 14-year old ethnic conflict was the main reason putting off Japanese business from investing in Sri Lanka.

According to a Japanese Embassy official, the cut in aid was caused by Japan's economic difficulties and the government's tight budget. "The escalating civil strife in the Northeast and its fall-out elsewhere were causing concern. This had prompted fear about the viability of Japanese funded projects", he told INDIA ABROAD. So far, no money has been given for projects in the troubled North and East.

Sri Lanka has been receiving Japanese technical co-operation since 1954 and Japanese loans annually since 1965. Over 32 percent of the aid provided through loans up to 1996 has been utilized for the improvement of transportation and for port rehabilitation, 20 percent for power and energy development, 8@percent for telecommunication and a further 8 percent for agriculture.

Among the largest projects financed by the Japanese government is the Colombo port, which has now become a hub in the region, along with the Samanalawewa hydro-electrical project for which loan aid in excess of 40.5 billion yen (about 337 million dollars) has been provided thus far. the Embassy official said.

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If you want Peace work for Justice!

(Pope John Paul II, in one of his Peace-Day Messages)

Talk delivered by Rev.Dr. S.J. Emmanuel at the Annual Dinner of Thamil Sangam, on Nov.9th. 1996, at Akbar, N.J.; USA

I thank the Thamil Sangam for having invited me to be the Chief Guest at this Annual Dinner 1996. 1 am sure your invitation went out, not just to an individual, but to someone representing or standing up for something worthy and dear to your heart, namely, the Tamils who are caught up m the war. I had the chance of accompanying those helpless and homeless people - facing the agonies of death and destruction caused by bombs and shells, facing starvation caused by the inhuman economic embargo, above all, facing injustices and misunderstandings locally and internationally, caused by the blockade of all truths concerning their situation. I stand here before you in the name of those voiceless people there and as a victim and a witness to the horrible incidents during the past few months.

Hence in honoring me as a guest here for this annual gathering, you are honoring andexpressing solidarity with the people who have already sacrificed their lives in the war or are still surviving as the displaced and the destitute in Thamil Eelam. (1 would humbly request you to standup and observe a minute's silence as a mark of respect for the fallen and a sign of solidarity with the suffering and surviving.)

This is my first visit to the US. In 1984 at the end of my Sabbatical assignment at the University of Muenster in Germany, I had the intention of visiting this country for the first time. I had then made my travel arrangements and looked forward to an enjoyable visit to this great country. But the turn of tragic events at home was so depressing that I called off my trip and returned immediately to Sri Lanka. In taking this decision, I was then reminded of what a German Pastor Dietrich Boenhoeffer wrote to his friend during the Hitler Regime, namely, unless one shares in the suffering that Germany was going through, one is not rightfully entitled to share in the joys of the new Germany to come.

Today the situation in Sri Lanka is much worse than it was in 1984. Still I have come from that war-zone to meet you all in this great city of New York on a mission to speak to you, my sisters and brothers, on behalf of our sisters and brothers, some already dead under tragic circumstances of the war, and on behalf of those still surviving the agonies of death, destruction, economic embargo and displacements and are still trekking their way with hope on the road to liberation.

In fulfilling my role here on behalf of my immediate people, I am neither forgetful nor distant from the aspirations of the larger majority the Sinhalese and the Buddhists of Sri Lanka. I wish to state categorically that we Tamils will succeed in our aspirations for freedom and liberation only to the extent that we wish the others in our country - the Sinhalese, the Buddhists, the Muslims and the Christians - their aspirations to be free and to grow as a people and a nation.

The recent events in our country point to so much of disaster and ruin, not only for the Tamils, but also for the others, that we all - Sinhalese, Tamils and Muslims, Buddhists, Hindus, Christians - should feel the danger ous course of national suicide we are heading for and urgently change course.

To refresh your mind, I would like to mention briefly the various stages through which the Tamil Struggle has gone through during the last four decades, then to highlight the turning point that we have now reached and to look ahead along with you, to the future

The forty year old struggle of the Tamil people in Sri Lanka has reached a new and definitive stage in its history. For over twenty years from the dawn of Independence from the British, there was the resurgence of a post-independence Nationalism that was largely pro-Sinhala-Buddhist and anti-Tamil. Faced with a series of anti-Tamil discriminations and violations of human rights, the Tamil political leaders sought constitutional protection within the frames of a united and democratic Ceylon and fought for the basic human lights of the Tamils remaining well within the democratic parlimentary system. But unfortunately the fervor and fanaticism of an ill-guided section of the majority paid scant respect to the aspirations of the Tamils democratic and non-violent protests and responded with waves of thuggery and military-violence, causing much death and destruction of Tamil lives and property.

Parallel to these violence against the Tamils, the majority Government largely succeed in buying over the support, of Tamil politicians who either valued their position, prestige and power above the larger interests of the Tamil community, or were deceived by the promises of the majority through Pacts which were unilaterally tom off by the Sri Lankan Governments. Among those deceived were many social and religious leaders, intellectuals and professionals too..

Faced with growing discrimination in the field of education and employment, death and destruction by repeated anti-Tamil riots, state-aided colonization of Tamil areas with Sinhalese with the Sinister motive of reducing Tamil representation in Parliament, etc. - the Tamils moved towards a consensus which was democratically and forcibly expressed in the Vaddukoddai Resolutions of 1976 and approved by an overwhelming Tamil population (over 75%) at the last Parliamentary Elections of 1977. It was a clear and democratic mandate to establish Thamil Eelam whereby the Tamils of Sri Lanka will be recognized as a distinct people and a nation with their own history, culture and land having the power to determine their own future

Although the next phase of the struggle took on a militant phase and the LTTE by their consistency in demands and by the sacrifice of so many lives, has come to stay as the de facto leadership of the Tamils of North east, the overwhelming consensus given by the Tamil people at the last parliamentary elections of 1977 has remained throughout as the basic demands of the Tamils. They were for the right of self-determination of a distinct Tamil people to administer their homeland as Thamil Eelam.

In spide of the tragic events like the holocaust of 1983 and the recent events in the North, the de facto leadership has expressed its readiness to consider an alternative for Thamil Eelam in the form of regional autonomy, but to-date there has been no such concrete proposals of regional autonomy on the table nor an invitation to the de facto leadership to consider such proposals. Instead the Governments is trying to label Tamil demands as only LTTE demands and to label the LTTE as a purely terrorist organization and is prosecuting a war against the Tamils. This will not in any way diminish the just nature of the basic demands of the Tamils nor lead us to any solution.

Coming to power on the promise of " Peace and no more war", the Chandrika Government did make an attempt to go for Peace-talks with the de facto leadership of the Tamils. But the cumulative effect of a weakly-composed peace-team from the Government, the reluctance of the Government to lift substantially the inhuman economic embargo against the Tamil people, and above all, the reluctance of the military to cooperate with the Government in implementing even the few gazetted decisions of the Government - all these forced the de facto leadership to give a month's notice to the Government and to go away from the negotiations.

In the light of what actually transpired between the Government and the LTTE, during the talks and witnessed by us, the Government's much publicized claim that the peace-talks were unilaterally and irresponsibly broken off by the LTTE cannot be accepted.

The present stage of the Tamil struggle could be characterized by just three situations on the ground.

The historic exodus of 500,000 people out of Jaffna the capture of an empty-Jaffna, the hoisting of the Lion Flag over it, the ceremony and celebration m Colombo smacking of a 20thcentury Sinhala imperialism and the subsequent military operations along Kilali lagoon to "suck in" a displaced and helpless population in exile in Thenmaradchi and Vadamaradchi into Jaffna are all a humiliating blow to the self-respect of all Tamils in the world. The earlier 1981 burning-down of the Jaffna Public Library by the Sri Lankan Police added to the present military hold-up of the Peninsula with all forms of restrictions including a daily curfew, destruction of all historic monuments and war-cemeteries, the cutting down of trees by their thousands - all these add up to a shameful rape of Jaffna, not to mention the hundreds of rapes done by the forces on innocent individuals like Krishanthie and her mother just a few weeks ago.

The second exodus of over 250,000 people out of Kilinochchi into the jungles of Vanni during the last week of July 1996 was made still more pathetic by the absence of all NG0s due to Government restrictions on their movement and material.

All these make the year 1995-1996 go down in the history of the Tamils, as the year in which almost a million Tamils from the Jaffna Peninsula and Vanni were either displaced in all directions by the aerial bombing and artillery shelling of the Sri Lankan Army or held in captivity by the Sri Lankan Forces.

For more than five years, the Sri Lankan Government has restricted the flow of food, medicine and other basic facilities of life - power, communication, transport stationary, confectionery, milk-foods etc. and causing thereby a slow death of a population. This violation of the collective rights of a people has been imposed by the Government on its own people without any justification and the world outside with numerous organizations for human rights appears to connive with this injustice by their silence.

Although the six-month old press-censorship in Colombo has been at last lifted, yet the horror of conducting a criminal war behind closed doors cannot be exaggerated. Just at the time when the war is escalated by aerial bombings, artillery shelling and all forms of blockade on movement, food, medicine etc. and the people are running about the jungles in desperation for survival, the southern part of the country as well as the world outside are kept in the dark by the prevention of local and foreign journalists into the North! If this is not a crime behind closed-doors, then what is it?

Governments and institutions which consider the indiscriminate aerial bombing and artillery shelling as well as the inhuman economic blockades against the Northeast as internal matters of the Sri Lankan state and refrain from condemning them as inhuman methods of subjugation of a people lose their right to condemn all alleged incidents of violence by the

L'ITE These governments and institutions must use their good influence to improve the conduct of the Sri Lankan Government with respect to the Tamils or seriously review their own relationship with the Sri Lankan Government.

I like to make just three simple comments on the present agenda of the Government. Indiscriminate Aerial Bombing and Artillery Shelling of Tamil areas and Enforcing of an inhuman Economic Blockade against the Tamils cannot be Justified as a War for Peace and as combating Terrorism.

Labeling the series of military operations after the 19th. of April 1995 - namely, Operation Leap Forward, Shake Hands, Lightning and Thunder, Riviresa 1, 11 & III - under the general title of a War for Peace is nothing but a shameful attempt by the Government, that came to power on the pledge of "no more war, only peace", to deceive the supporters as well as the world outside, in order to win financial support and weapons for the war against Tamils. And labeling the LTTE as a mere terrorist organisation and justifying its military actions as purely against terrorism, is again an attempt to hide its own history of state terrorism and the anti-Tamil riots of 1956,58, 77 and 83 for the purpose of getting finance and weapons. It is an attempt to reduce the long standing ethnic problem into a mere terrorist problem and to justify a military solution for it.

Destroying- an existing de facts Tamil leadership is closing the door to Peace-negotiations.

The last Parliament Elections in which all Tamils of the North and East participated was that of 1977. It was at this election that the Tamil people gave a resounding mandate to the Vaddukoddai Resolutions of 1976. It was thus the overwhelming decision of the Tamil people for a separate state of Thamil Eelam comprising of the North and East of Sri Lanka, where the Tamils could enjoy sufficient political power and foster their own culture and development. This was in consonance with the collective Human Rights as enunciated by the Declarations of the UNO in 1948 as well as in 1966. Though the de facto leadership has become a militant one, the mandate they carry is an approved mandate of the Tamil people. They are consistent in articulating the demands of the Tamil people, and it is impossible to buy them over with privileges of ministerial posts as was done by the previous governments. Hence an attempt to destroy the de facto leadership of the LTTE is to close the doors to any meaningful negotiations with the Tamils. -

> *"Though the (Tamil) defacto leadership has become a militant one, the mandate they carry is an approved mandate of the Tamil people"*

Imposing a Sinhala majority decision on a subjugated and an unwilling Tamil population is against all freedom and democracy

Entertaining hopes of imposing , the will of the majority Sinhalese Government on a leaderless Tamil people or on a people with puppet-leadership is against freedom and democracy and smacks of imperialism.

A political solution largely discussed and decided by the majority, without the participation of the larger sections of the Tamils, without the participation of the de facto leadership, is not at all acceptable. The Devolution package was publicized long after starting the "war for peace" in July 1995 and the LTTE leadership, as well as the people of Northeast were actively excluded from any debate of the package, The President and the Minister for Constitutional Affairs publicly announced that the package will not be sent to the LTTE. And by the time, the Package was put out on Aug.3rd. the Tamils were on their run into the jungles for survival. It was not the time nor the climate for political debate. Hence it is evident that the majority has the intention of discussing the plan among themselves and imposing it on the Tamils in their state of destitute and displacement.

It is very unfortunate that almost half a million of the Tamils of Sri Lanka are living outside the country, either as long-standing expatriates or as recently arrived refugees. A wealth of professionals, intellectuals and in recent times as a consequence of the discriminatory and dangerous situation at home, an exodus of youth with their talents and skills are living outside their homeland.

In recent months, the Sri Lankan Government has been pushing the Governments of countries with large refugee and expatriate population, either to repatriate them or to condemn them as supporters of terrorist organizations or to curtail their activities and financial aid to the suffering and dying in Sri Lanka as aid to terrorism. Let every country handle the expatriates and refugee in their countries, with its own laws and procedures. Instead of being overconcerned or peeping into the activities of the Tamil expatriates and refugees, let conditions be created at home for the return of at least some Tamil abroad.

My travel around these countries have shown me how under difficult conditions of climate, culture, language, conditions of work, etc. our people are living and still so deeply concerned about the situation of people caught up in the present war. They sustain themselves by means of a network of communications and associations and also help people at home by their financial contributions for charitable purposes..

During my visits I have made appeals to these expatriates and refugees in the name of all the brave people fallen victims to military operations as well as in the name of those courageously surviving the war. My appeal has been to sink petty differences and to join hands in the name of the common Tamil mother, to show more concern for our struggle, to contribute your talents and services and help us achieve a life of self-respect and human dignity on the land of our birth..

I would go a step further and spell out an additional appeal to those in the States.

Though many of you are privileged sons and daughters of the same Tamil motherland, and have the same genuine concern about her future and the welfare of present and future children, yet there seems to be some misunderstandings hindering a strong collaboration among you here in service to the noble goals of the Tamil people.

Some of you may have left our shores as a result of suffering some form of discrimination or as victims of anti-Tamil riots and some others may have not. Some of you may have moved in here early for better prospects of life and work. But there are others who have moved into this country after suffering various forms of hardships and having witnessed directly some horrible violations of human rights. In other words, there is no one homogeneous flow of Tamil youth into this country from a stable and steady situation at home. Hence there exists some room for gaps in understanding and acceptance and this gap has adverse effects on the contribution we expect for the cause of the Tamils suffering in Sri Lanka.

I like to appeal on behalf of your motherland to understand and accept one another and pool your resources at the service of our liberation. Let the elders or the early settlers, not look down on their younger brothers and sisters, as from a stepmother. It's the same mother who educated you with her good schools and sent as the elder sons and daughters, that is now sending the younger ones too, but devoid of all earlier facilities and shine. Hence the younger ones coming with the scares of a war and the discriminations of a later age, may have a different perception of things and show enthusiasm and fervor in a manner different from those of the elder ones. Similarly I will like to tell the youth who came in recent times to look up to their elders for advice, services and contributions. Our cause is a noble one of justice and peace. It cannot be let down for lack of collaboration among you or contribution from you.

You are living in a country, far away from Sri Lanka, but important in its role for stopping the war, for promoting justice and human rights and in pushing towards a solution. Much could be done by you all in propagating the truth of our situation, and in agitating for justice and peace in our country through the various delegations having their principle seat in New York. You have varies talents that need to be coordinated and harnessed for our cause. I am sure you will do something in responding to this call at this hour of need.

Standing on the American soil and remembering the words of a great President John Kennedy of this country, let me conclude with the words, " Tamils of Sri Lanka! Ask not, what your country has done for you, but what you have done for your country".

Once again, I thank you for having me as your guest,

May God bless you and your families.

S.J.Emmanuel

SOME THOUGHTS ON THE ELECTION RESULTS

In the recent local elections in Sri Lanka both main Sinhala political parties have failed to secure a clear mandate from the Sinhala majority. The PA government's claim of a landslide victory sounds hollow indeed. On the contrary, the election results must have added another blow to the steadily dwindling hopes among the diplomatic community in Colombo, as to the viability of the government's two-pronged strategy to end the war defeating the LTTE politically and militarily, i.e. by getting the 'Peace Package' approved by the Sinhala majority and then try and cause divisions among the Tamil masses undermining the LTTE base on the one hand, and proceeding with the military effort to crush the Tiger leadership, on the other hand.

The government has failed to garner the expected 55% which would have given it the courage to go for a referendum on the Package. If we allow for the widespread intimidation and 'stuffing of ballot boxes' etc., [as alleged by the independent election monitoring group (MFFE)], then the PA's official figure also must be seen as exaggerated. The fact, as observed by the VoA correspondent in Colombo, is that the difference between the two parties is marginal. Given the uncertainty of the outcome, the government would be reluctant to put the Package to a referendum, without the open support from the UNP. Prof. G.L. Peiris intends to place the new Draft Constitution before the parliament within the next two months. That would be the acid test to see the real impact of the election results on the UNP mind-set. Although it is a bit too early to say anything definitive on this, let me reflect a little on some strong possibilities:

The possibility of the UNP co-operating with the government to help it get the Package through is very remote indeed, considering the new hopes generated within the UNP leadership as a consequence of the election results. Commenting on the results, the UNP leader, Ranil Wickramasinghe, is reported to have said, " The results show that we can win the next elections. We're on the way up". In other words, the results seem to have strengthened the UNP's self-confidence. Ranil seems to think that his present strategy is working in his favour.

"If the prospects of the Package becoming law begin to diminish in the coming period, then the pressure on the PA government from its foreign mentors to restart negotiations with the LTTE is likely to heighten..."

PA's future failures in military, political and economic terms are bound to be perceived by the UNP as being electorally beneficial to them. The violent conflicts between the two parties (i.e. UNP and the SLFP) in the run up to the elections are likely to continue in the foreseeable future. The UNP may even be delighted to use the clashes as an excuse for their policy of non-cooperation.

It is not difficult to see that any military and political successes for the PA in the North/East war would be disastrous for the UNP in electoral terms. Therefore it would be in the interest of the UNP to sabotage all efforts by the PA to give a semblance of success in 'solving' the national-conflict.

The decisive factor that has always determined the behaviour of main Sinhala political parties since Independence has been 'the greed for political power'. There is no reason to believe this time it is going to be different. The only difference this time is: the divisions created by the 'political opportunism' within the Sinhala political establishment may work in favour of the Tamil freedom struggle.

Had the PA been successful in securing a massive mandate at the local elections, Ranil's leadership would have been discredited, and consequently the UNP would have no alternative but to compromise on the 'Package issue'. On the contrary, however, the election results have provided an incentive for the UNP to undermine all efforts by the SLFP to emerge as the party that 'defeated' the Tigers and achieved 'peace'! The UNP's likely target, under the new circumstances, would be to see that the extremely volatile PA government is toppled at the earliest opportunity so that they can win the next general election. Ranil knows that the one and only factor which keeps the PA floating, at present, is nothing but the 'perceived viability of the two-pronged strategy to achieve peace'. If that fails the PA is doomed.

The UNP leaders know that the PA does not have much time to mess around. A few more military disasters in the North/East, together with political failures in relation to the Package would be seen by the UNPers as bringing political fortunes for them. So just as the incentive to whip up anti-Tamil sentiments among the Sinhala majority, since Independence, has been provided by the greed to grab 'political power' the easy way, under the new circumstances, the incentive to wish for military and political disasters for one section of the Sinhala establishment (SLFP) by another (UNP) will be provided by the same greed to grab 'political power'.

Already the most politically shrewd layers in the Sinhala South can be seen promoting a 'national government' in the hope of getting round the wedge between the two main Sinhala parties, so that the Package and a new constitution can eventually be offered to the Tamil people and, if necessary, to a 'militarily weakened' LTTE. In fact, this strategy would have worked, at least to some extent, had the UNP ended up substantially weakened in the local elections. But, on the contrary, the election results have raised the UNP's hopes of winning the next general elections. The UNP victory in Colombo, Kandy and Nuware Eliya, where most Tamils live, has signalled that the Tamils living in the South are willing to support the UNP. (Perhaps, this was the way the Tamils living in the South wanted to show their disgust and rejection of the southern Tamil political parties who back the PA government.

The UNP leadership must be well aware that the marginal lead the SLFP has among the Sinhala peasantry may evaporate as the military failures in the North/East become markedly clear. Therefore, it would be in the interest of the UNP to make sure the PA' s war strategy fails miserably. Joining in a national government in order to help the PA (read: SLFP) to achieve a glorious success in solving the biggest problem in Sri Lanka is bound to be seen by the UNP as 'political suicide', particularly when the election results have given it new hopes. Hence, the UNP is more likely to resist the pressure to form a national government, and instead, do everything in their capacity to see Mrs.Kumaratunga's 'two-pronged strategy' fails miserably.

But would the business community and the diplomatic community in Colombo be able to pressurise the UNP leaders to help the PA to push the new draft constitution through the parliament, despite the UNP-concerns about the obvious political damage such a move would cause on them? We will have to wait and see.

Up until now, the diplomatic community in Colombo seemed to be placing all its bets on the 'eventual success' of the Package, in spite of several military disasters for government troops in the North and East. However, the uncertainty caused by the election results may force them to have second thoughts. If the prospects of the Package becoming law begin to diminish in the coming period, then the pressure on the PA government from its foreign mentors to restart negotiations with the LTTE is likely to heighten, particularly in the context of the LTTE's increasingly ferocious attacks on the government troops.

- VASANTHA RAJA

Sri Lankan Nirj Deva in the news again

Sri Lankan M.P. in the British House of Commons figured in the previous issue of HOT SPRING (February 4 Fiasco at Westminster).

Now, he is in the news again. Here is a tongue-in-the-cheek reference to him, by Paul Routledge in the INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY of 15 March 1997.-

"And finally to Goodbye Corner, the service that despatches Tory MPs to obscurity, decent or otherwise. A fond adieu to Nirj Deva, the Conservatives' only black Member of Parliament. His majority of 2,000 in the West London constituency of Brentford and Isleworth looks certain to tumble to the discreet charms of Labour's Ann Keen.

"Deva owns Sri Lanka, or quite a lot of it, anyway. In the register of members' interests, he lists family ownership of coconut, rubber and tea estates on the island. oh, and a distillery. He also declares consultancies to cigarette makers Rothman, to the building firm Laing International, to a firm of loss adjusters, to a power station equipment maker, and to the Turkish Cypriot Association of the UK. Quite how he finds the time to be an MP escapes me, though he was in the House last week for a Commons Cigar and Pipesmoking Club lunch. On National No-Smoking day, naturally.

"His departure could set off a reversal of the unemployment figures trend. Deva is reputed to have the largest staff of any MP. Some say six, some say eight. What they do is anybody's guess. What is certain is that Ann Keen, a former nurse who has fought the seat twice before, will not have such an entourage ....

Tamil Diaspora:
The Unintended Consequences

HINDUISM TODAY
Tamils' Desperate Diaspora 22
Truth's in the Palm of His Hand 30
South Africa's Navy Chaplain 18

(An extract from the Editorial of HINDUISM TODAY, April 1997. HINDUISM TODAY is a monthly journal published by Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, from Himalayan Academy,107, Kaholalele Road, Kapaa, Hawaii 96746-9304 USA. Satguru Sivaya Subramuniyaswami, an American national, is a disciple of Sage Yogaswami of Jaffna)

.... Witness the massive diaspora of Sri Lanka's Tamil Hindu community. Ethnic fighting has driven 700,000 Hindus from their homeland, forcing them to find refuge around the globe. But they are not languishing. Their innate ambition, love of education, and commitment to community have brought Lanka's refugees more opportunity than oppression. They have become professionals, built temples, and strengthened their situation in almost every case. Yes, they have suffered deeply. But they are now established, and their enhanced financial and intellectual resources are feeding back to families and causes in Sri Lanka. Trying to rein in the Tamil Hindus, the Sinhalese Buddhists have spread them like wildflower seeds across the planet where they (along with their spiritual and cultural heritage) are taking root and flourishing as never before.

"One is reminded of a Guru Nanak story. Inhospitably received in a village, he bestowed a seeming blessing, saying: "May God keep you together always". Warmly welcomed in another, he uttered an apparent curse, "May God scatter you everywhere". Pressed to explain, he offered:" It is better that bad people stay in one place so their influence is limited; similarly, it is best that good people are dispersed so their influence becomes widespread".

Picture on the cover of the magazine shows a Jaffna-born couple who got married in London.

Archbishop visits UK temple

The Archbishop of Canterbury, the Most Reverend George Carey, made an historic visit to a British Hindu temple on December 13 last year. He was given a tour by the mahant of the temple.

Rev.Carey spoke eloquently on inter-religious understanding and cooperation. "We need to express generosity and genuine tolerance in listening to the experiences of those from traditions different to our own. Interfaith dialogue is not an option) but a necessity. Building on a foundation of our common humanity, our shared spiritual quest and our common longings for peace, acceptance and love, we can speak and act together in a number of ways. For instance, we can together stand against the evils of racism, and challenge the materialism that threatens to become all-enveloping. We can together work for the protection and enhancement of our environment; we can together bring practical help and support to those who suffer, both in this country and around the world ".

(Courtesy: HINDUISM TODAY, April1997)

L. Kadirgamar & S.J.C. Kadirgamar

Editor
HOT SPRING

Dear Sir,

It was with great interest that I read the references to the Foreign Minister, L.K. in the recent issue of your magazine.

What is the driving force behind the belligerence of the Foreign Minister whom we all know is a political novice, full of bombast, no substance, and behaves like a bull in a china shop in furtherance of the destruction of the Tamil community and their homelands ? What is the cause of this exhuberance?

Amazing exhuberance

His contention that the conflict in Sri Lanka is an internal affair has elicited a brilliant response from N.Satyendra elsewhere. That response bears the hallmark of a sound legal brain unlike that of L.K. of Tawahkal fame which nearly brought down the Chandrika government. He was proved a sucker.

His exhuberance amazes every other Tamil - relative, friend or foe, and even Sinhalese. Could it be career ambition in his sixties at the expense of the entire Tamil community ? He seems to be enjoying the best of both worlds from his Tamil origin and assumed ethnicity like the "Kalu Sudhas" of Colonial times, regardless of what the Tamils think of him. He appears to be totally insensitive to Tamil opinion.

A suitable P.M?

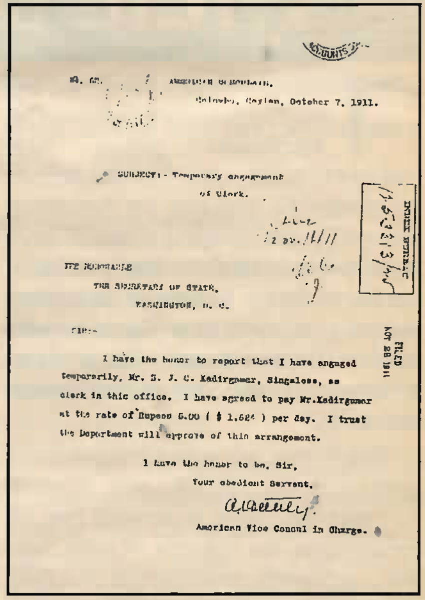
There is even speculation on the Internet that President Chandrika will find him a suitable and safe candidate to be the next P.M. should anything happen to her mother, just as President Premadasa did in choosing D.B.(Deaf and Blind) Wijetunga in preference to Lalith A and Gamini D. or is this exhuberance due to an inherited trait which was so prevalent in those days among some Cinnamon Gardens Tamils who left their humble homes in Jaffna during colonial times went to greener pastures in Colombo, became "Kalu Sudhas" and always despised Jaffna and its people, even their own kith and kin. Their best qualification was that they had not been to Jaffna for many years. So when the colonial masters left, they had no difficulty in falling in line with their new Sinhala masters.

A "Singalese" clerk

L.K.'s background requires a deeper scrutiny for Tamils to understand the man. The article on "Traitors Gallery" has elucidated part of the enigma. It is hoped that the annexed document will further unravel the mystery. In the year 1911, S.J.C.Kadirgamar passed off as a "Sinhalese" in the eyes of the US.State Department. (L.K. will surely recognise his ancestry) What is there to prevent L.K. for reasons of personal advancement passing off as a Tamil in the year 1997 in the eyes of the same US.State Department ?

yours faithfully,

An avid reader of HOT SPRING
(name withheld on request)



No. 68. AMERICAN CONSULATE,
Colombo, Ceylon, October 7, 1911.

SUBJECT:- Temporary engagement of Clerk.

THE HONORABLE
THE SECRETARY OF STATE,
WASHINGTON, D. C.

INDEX BUREAU

FILED NOV 28 1911

SIR:-

I have the honor to report that I have engaged temporarily, Mr. S. J. C. Kadirgamar, Singalese, as clerk in this office. I have agreed to pay Mr.Kadirgamar at the rate of Rupees 5.00 ($ 1.624) per day. I trust the Department will approve of this arrangement.

I have the honor to be, Sir,
Your obedient Servant,

American Vice Consul in Charge.

No. 68
American Consulate
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your obedient servant,

(sgd) ....
signature indecipherable
American Vice Consul in Charge.

Prolonged detention of asylum seekers not humane

The recent hunger strike by asylum seekers detained at Rochester prison has brought to public attention the British government's practice of detaining some of those seeking political asylum. Between 750 and 800 such people are in British prisons or detention centres at any one time. Some remain detained for over a year. This practice is neither humane, nor, in most cases necessary.

Britain has accepted international obligations to identify and protect refugees who have a genuine fear of persecution "for reasons of race, religion, nationality, membership of a particula social group, or political opinion" (*United Nations CONVENTION RELATING TO THE STATUS OF THE REFUGEE,ARTICLE 1, GENEVA , UN 1951*). This necessitates procedures to decide which asylum seekers meet this criteria. Unfortunately, Britain's current procedures involve long delays before decisions are reached, and too often they fail to inspire confidence that the right decision has been made.

The most important consideration for asylum seekers when they arrive in Britain is to know that they have reached a place of safety. They are often exhausted and confused on arrival. Some may have just left prison. Victims of torture may be near despair, clinging to the hope of safety and of a chance to live. Some of these asylum seekers, including victims of torture, will be detained in prisons or detention centres either on arrival or at some point during the government's decision making process. Lawyers and those who work with refugees are often at a loss to understand apparently arbitrary decisions to detain particular individuals, and the often equally unexplained decisions to release them.

Many medical studies report on the serious mental and emotional effects that detention had on asylum seekers' health. . . .

Non-medical reports on detention also refer to the suffering involved. In his report on a visit to Campsfield House Detention Centre in Oxfordshire, Judge Stephen Tumim, Britain's Chief inspector of prisons, noted: "Detention without time limit, no matter how reasonable the conditions, is extremely stressful. When combined with .. the fact that some detainees appeared to be terrified at the prospect of being deported, the stress increases".

Automatic independent judicial review would reduce unnecessary suffering, says this editorial in a recent issue of the BRITISH MEDICAL JOURNAL.

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees takes the view that " in view of the hardship which it involves, detention should normally be avoided" (*Conclusion on the International Protection of Refugees adopted by the Executive Committee of the UNHCR Programme, Geneva, UNHCR, 1991*)

More recently the commissioner's guidance has been that "as a general rule, asylum seekers should not be detained", but if they are, they should have "the right to challenge the lawfulness of the deprivation of liberty promptly before a competent, independent and impartial authority" (*UNHCR Regional Bureau for Europe.Detention of asylum seekers in Europe. European series 1995: 1(4):9.12*)

The British government maintains that it uses detention very sparingly and only when it is essential to check identity, to prevent absconding,or to make it easier to remove people from Britain. But only a quarter of those etained are awaiting removal; the rest are still awaiting a decision. of around 750 asylum seekers in detention in November 1996, 158 had already spent six months or more in detention. The Home Office adamantly refuses to have its decision to detain challenged automatically and independently in the courts. Thus the detention of asylum seekers amounts to detention for an indefinite period without charge or trial.

The main objection to the British system is the lack of any independent judicial control of the process. Internal reviews by the Home Office of the decision to detain are not sufficiently independent;bail hearings, habeas corpus,and judicial review applications are not automatic. Even individuals charged with terrorist offences have an automatic court hearing after seven days. It is essential that asylum seekers who have not been charged with any offence are guaranteed the opportunity to argue their case promptly before an independent and impartial judicial authority. If this were instituted, we believe that the number of those detained would be fewer and the length of detention shorter.

The government's detention policy should be seen in the context of increasingly restrictive asylum legislation. New legislation deprives many asylum seekers, some of whom are later recognised as genuine refugees, of the right to welfare benefits while they pursue their asylum claims.

Much of the pain of being a refugee cannot be prevented by the receiving country. The pain of exile and all that goes with it are well known. But the intense anxiety created by the present system in Britain makes meaningful rebuilding of lives much more difficult and leads to great and unnecessary human suffering.

U.S.Refugee body is critical of Sri Lanka's military

The U.S.Committee for Refugees (USCR), a U.S.based institution closely associated with the U.'S.government on refugee affairs has called upon the Sri Lankan government and the Sri Lankan military to observe various proprieties in the pursuit of its war against the Tamils.

In its report issued recently, the Committee has made the following recommendations :-

The Sri Lankan military should put an end to the "dis-appearance" of civilians and follow legally proscribed procedures regarding the arrest and detention of civilians, including the notification of family members.

The Sri Lankan military should make public the names of individuals it is presently detaining and either charge and prosecute them or release them.

The Sri Lankan military should bring an end to the rape and sexual harassment of women and girls by soldiers. Although the Sri Lankan authorities have taken steps to prosecute the soldiers involved in one well-publicized case involving the rape and murder of a Jaffna girl and the killing of her relatives, rape by soldiers is far more prevalent than just this one case. The president and the military should give an unequivocal message that they will not tolerate this or other Human rights violations by soldiers, and take steps to investigate and prosecute whenever there are allegations of rape or other abuses by soldiers.

The Sri Lankan military should expand the number of entry points through the security cordon round Jaffna town to make it easier for civilians, including the many who live outside the security cordon but work, study, and shop in Jaffna city, to move in and out of the city.

The Sri Lankan military should reduce the number of security checkpoints within Jaffna city to the minimum necessary to ensure adequate security.

The Sri Lankan authorities (both military and civilian) should permit local non-governmental organizations (NG0s) to operate. This would not only add to the civilian character of life in Jaffna, but would also extend the range of services available to the civilian population.

The Sri Lankan authorities should permit a free flow of information in and out of Jaffna, including permitting. visits by the media, NG0s, and human rights monitors.

The Sri Lankan government should provide food rations to all displaced and war-affected persons Wanni who require help. Tens of thousands of people are t risk because the government will not provide them food aid, allegedly because se it views them as sympathetic to the LTTE. If the government will not assist these people, it should allow the international community to do so.

A futile and horrible war

A chapter on Chechnya is the book's best. The war was a futile and horrible one, tolerated by Russia's new friends in the West (who went on sending money) on the grounds that it was an "internal matter". The Russian army touched levels of brutality and incompetence that eventually shocked even its own political masters but only after up to 80,000 Chechens had been killed for no purpose any sane person could explain. Mr. Remnick's account man ages to compress the salient aspects of the dreadful story into a few pages that boggle the mind, and set the heart sinking. Yet it appears that those responsible for the worst excesses of the Chechen war-like those responsible for the worst excesses of Soviet repression will go unpunished. Even in the "new" Russia, punishment is something reserved for the weak.

From a review of the book RESURRECIONS : THE STRUGGLE FOR A NEW RUSSIA. BY DAVID REMNICK. RANDOM HOUSE.

(The Economist, London. March 8 1997)

Chechnya's rular Aslan Maskhador

SRI LANKA IRKED BY 8 NGO STATEMENT

(Report by a Special Correspondent from Geneva)

Geneva, 14 March - Ambassador Bernard A.B.Goonetilleke, Leader of the Sri Lanka Delegation to the 53rd Session of the UN Commission on Human Rights took the floor on 14 March to respond to the Joint Statement made by 8 NGOs the day before recognising the Tamils right to self determination and calling upon Sri Lanka to withdraw its military forces from the Tamil homeland. The NGO Joint Statement had clearly irked Sri Lanka. In what was seen by informed NGO circles as a patronising remark, Ambassador Goonetilleke regretted that 'some well meaning NGOs' had been 'misled' into recognising the Tamils right to self determination.

The Sri Lanka statement appeared to have been prepared in haste and was confused in parts. On the one hand, Ambassador Goonetilleke admitted that "it had been universally accepted that self determination is a right to be enjoyed by peoples who are under colonial or alien domination or foreign occupation".

He also conceded that today "there are some territories that are still under alien domination or foreign occupation which necessitate the peoples in these territories to demand their right to self determination."

He then went on state: " It has also been recognised that those who live in independent countries and exercise their democratic rights by forming governments that represent them at regular intervals, continue to exercise their right of self determination...People who are living in modern nation States which have embraced the internationally accepted norms of civil society, including international agreements and covenants pertaining to human rights and enjoy democratic rights, fall into this category. Therefore, minorities and ethnic groups which live in multiethnic countries that practice democratic ways of life, can be regarded as people who fully enjoy their right to self determination."

Informed observers at the UN Sessions in Geneva were quick to point out that Ambassador Goonetilleke appeared to concede that the Tamils are a people entitled to the right of self determination. They added:

"The point that Sri Lanka seems to be making is that because Sri Lanka is a 'democracy', Tamils can be regarded as a people who 'fully enjoy their right to self determination.' But the forty year record of gross and systematic violations of the human rights of the Tamil people gives the lie direct to any claim that Sri Lanka is a democracy which has embraced internationally accepted norms of civil society."

They pointed out that it was this very issue that the 8 NGO statement addressed in its first paragraph when it declared:

"1. In the island of Sri Lanka, the struggle of the Tamil people for self determination arose in response to decades of oppressive alien Sinhala rule and as a result of successive Sinhala dominated Sri Lanka governments dishonouring agreements, such as the Bandaranaike-Chelvanayagam Pact of 1957 and the Dudley Senanayake - Chelvanayagam Agreement of 1965, solemnly entered into with Tamil parliamentary parties."

Ambassador Goonetilleke's intervention has given the impression that he had failed to recognise that he was addressing a knowledgeable audience who were well aware of the nature of Sri Lanka's 'embrace' of international covenants and for instance, the comments of the International Commission of Jurists Report on the 6th Amendment to the Sri Lanka Constitution:

"The freedom to express political opinions, to seek to persuade others of their merits, to seek to have them represented in Parliament, and thereafter seek Parliament to give effect to them, are all fundamental to democracy itself.

These are precisely the freedoms which Article 25 (of the International Covenant of Civil and Political Rights) recognises and guarantees - and in respect of advocacy for the establishment of an independent Tamil State in Sri Lanka, those which the 6th Amendment is designed to outlaw. It therefore appears to me plain that this enactment constitutes a clear violation by Sri Lanka of its obligations in international law under the Covenant"

Betty Boothroyd & Sri Lanka

Remember the letter written by HOT SPRING contributor Charles Somasundrum to House of Commons Speaker Betty Boothroyd which we published in the previous issue? (February 4 Fiasco at Westminster)

HOT SPRING reader Dr.R. sends us some excerpts from a biography of Betty Boothroyd, MADAM SPEAKER, THE LIFE OF BETTY BOOTHROYD, authored by British journalist Paul Routledge (Harper Collins Publishers). We take pleasure in reproducing some of the extracts, which we feel have some relevance to what happened at Westminster on February 4:

On a visit to Sri Lanka in late l993, Betty told a friend she has visited the island no less eighteen times. According to official sources, all the visits but two have been private, though she was an official of the British-Sri Lanka Parliamentary Group at least as far back as 1983. Most of the trips have been during December and January, when the House was in recess.

However, Betty took part in a ten-member British Parliamentary team of inspection which visited the island for a week in the early summer of 1984, presumably at the invitation of the Colombo government of President Junius Jayewardene.The group met ministers, travelled to the war-ravaged areas, and met leaders of opposition parties including the mainstream non-violent Tamil Reformists. At the end of this tour, three of the MPs, Berry, Michael Morris (who was Chairman of the British-Sri Lanka Parliamentary Group, and is now her Deputy Speaker) produced a report entitled 'Some Impressions of Sri Lanka'. In it, they said, 'Our conclusion is that we see no basis for the call for Eelam. The majority in the Eastern Region are totally against it, and in the North it represents a demand for realistic regional devolution.'

While this is predominantly the case, the verdict of the MPs would have come as music to the ears of President Jayewardene, who like most of the government, the army and the ranking civil servants, belongs to the majority Sinhalese community which was fighting to put down the Tamil revolt. The civil war was a no-quarter, merciless affair, which prompted international concern over the suppression of civil rights and random murders by the security forces, which could have hindered the flow of aid and materiel to Sri Lanka. The MPs' endorsement of its policies would have been a welcome boost to the Jayewardene administration.

However, Betty can scarcely be said to have capitalized upon it. A well-placed informant in Colombo says, that while Madam Speaker has close friends in the government and in the public and private sectors, she has 'declined with thanks' Foreign Ministry offers to make her an official guest. However, says the source in Colombo, on several occasions the Foreign Ministry provided her a limousine with fuel and chauffeur for her travels within the country. Everyone describes her as a 'good friend of Sri Lanka'. She has a good knowledge of Sri Lankan affairs, particularly about the ethnic conflict. Whenever Labour MPs wanted some background about the situation in Sri Lanka they always went to Boothroyd and she provided them with an unbiased and objective account.

Spicy rice and curry

'During her visits, she used to stay at a five-star hotel in Colombo for a couple of days and then visit the island's historical and cultural centres such as Anuradhapura, Polonnaruwa, Kandy (where she saw a tooth relic of the Buddha), and Sigiriya. She loves the sea and often spent hours swimming or lazing on the beaches of the south-west coast. Her favourite places were the beach resorts at Wadduwa, about thirty miles south of Colombo, and Unawatunna, near the southern capital of Galle, seventy-two miles south. A Sri Lankan who knows her well says she is a very friendly and informal person, despite being an MP and the Speaker. He described how she rang him one day from her hotel and said 'I say ... I've run out whisky. Can you spare a bottle?' He obliged of course . . .'

Betty, said the informant, likes the Island's spicy rice and curry, but not too much chilli. And when she goes home she always takes a kilo or two of fresh limes. 'What she used the lime for is not known.'

Most Asians, ignorant of the ways of Annie's Bar, would not know of her penchant for gin and tonic, which tastes so much better with fresh limes.

Suffering and Death, the price of resisting Evil.

Mr.Sam. Jeyathilagarajah, Methodist Minister at Croydon, has sent the following message for Easter (excerpts):-

"...History has reminded us that suffering and death would be the portion for those who stood against the evils of the world. Jesus himself said to his disciples: "in the world you shall have tribulations". "Mahatma Gandhi showed the world, religion and politics cannot be separated, and that they together can achieve a good order for humankind. He tirelessly stood for his ideals that the people of India should live together, but the price for his ideals was the forfeit of his life. "It was Martin Luther King who had a dream, dream of white and black living together in America, but that aspiration for future generations to live in harmony, cost his life.

"It was young Nelson Mandela who stood against the evil of apartheid in South Africa, which led him to spend 27 years of his early life behind bars.

"We too, as Sri Lankan Tamils, today walking in suffering and humiliation as displaced people around the globe, have a price to pay, in your commitment to achieve freedom and dignity on our own homeland in Eelam.

"As new life and new hope came into the disheartened followers of Jesus on the first Easter morn, a newness of life and hope can come upon us too which gives us resurrection strength to achieve our goal.

Our strength is working together, our love is uniting together, our goal is achieving together".

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HUMAN RIGHTS & POLITICAL CLOUT

Owen Bennet Jones, BBC correspondent in Geneva

It is supposed to be the world's supreme body for protecting human rights, the annual contest by the shores of Lake Geneva to see which countries are condemned and which escape censure.

Every spring the corridors of the Palais des Nations fill up with delegates and campaigners attending the yearly session of the UN Human Rights Commission....

Fearful of provoking reciprocal attacks, most countries at the Human Rights Commission will refrain from openly criticising others. Western states tend to put down critical resolutions, but only after they have taken their security, economic and political interests into account. If past form is anything to go by, parts of the Commission report will be positively searing, but they will be aimed at the usual suspects. The international misfits which lack political clout such as Nigeria, Burma, Iraq, Sudan, Iran and Cuba. 'The countries which get singled out," conceded one UN official, "are those with no powerful allies"....

The cynicism with which the Commission's work is manipulated is exposed with remarkable clarity when a country once close to the West is demoted to pariah status. When still a major purchaser of Western arms, Iraq used to escape condemnation in Geneva. Saddam Hussein even launched a chemical weapon attack on the Kurdish village of Halabja with scarcely a reprimand. But now he is an international outcast, even the suggestion of an assault would risk the imposition of more UN sanctions.

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Heenetigala & HOT SPRING

HOT SPRING reader "Valluvan" of Maryland, U.S.A writes:~

Dear Editor,

I am surprised and saddened that you provided space for the news item "Sri Lankan doctor on sex charges" in the February 1997 issue of HOT SPRING (Page 29). I believe such a eye-catching sleaze should have no place in your publication, really meant to promote and protect fundamental freedoms of persecuted peoples, and to provide unbiassed news coverage related to such noble goals.

If you ever have spare space in your columns, why not ...... (fax indistinct) for the souls of the many thousands of Tamils who have perished in Sri Lanka since the 1956 anti-Tamil riots and for comforting the millions who continue to suffer from the various military operations in the North-East ....

Note by Editor:

Valluvan's point is well taken, but on our part, we owe him and our readers an explanation. The report that appeared in *HOT SPRING* was a news item that was published in an Australian newspaper, the MELBOURNE AGE. The paragraph indicating that,as well as the one that gave the reason why we found it pertinent to carry this particular news item, were both unfortunately left out in page making in the computer through an oversight on our part.

HOT SPRING certainly would not be interested in projecting the sex life of anyone, but in this instance Dr.Heenatigala was not just a Sri Lankan doctor, but the President and driving force of an organisation, which under the pretentious name of Society for Peace, Unity and Human Rights (SPUR) is involved in carrying on a vendetta against Tamil activists in Australia, and priding on its Sinhala-Buddhist morality.

HOT SPRING has a duty not only to promote and protect fundamental freedoms of persecuted peoples, as Valluvan rightly points out, but also to expose those uphold such persecution.

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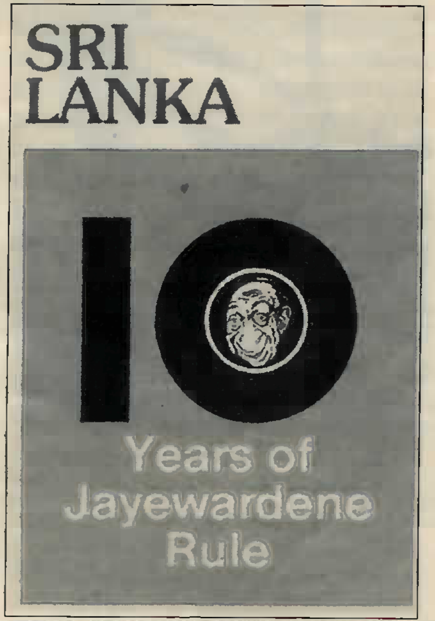
JAYEWARDENE'S YEARS OF POWER

A Contemporary Assessment (1987)

Part IV

(Continued from previous issue)



S.Sivanayagam

The fact that a 7-year political dormancy separated Junius Richard Jayewardene's years of power and his death at the age of 90 may have had something to do with the charitable references, and the flattering obituaries and cosmetic acclaim that he earned at his death.

Public memory being what it is, short, and often selective, HOT SPRING brings to its readers the fourth part of a contemporary assessment and narrative of Jayewardene's years of power, written and published in 1987.

IN a 40-page booklet, titled 10 YEARS OF JAYEWARDENE RULE, the author S. Sivanayagam covered the years 1977 - 1987, and records a chunk of history that was both dark and depressing, and illustrative of the ignoble style of Jayewardene's governance.

The year of the Referendum

Referring to the year 1982, Nancy Murray has said : "1982 is, from a safe distance, regarded as a "quiet" year, sandwiched between the ferocity of 1981 and 1983". *(Racism and the Authoritarian State)*. This writer who was in no such safe distance - barely a mile from the then Army headquarters in Jaffna, and editing a paper, the *Saturday Review*, hardly lovable by Army standards - thinks nevertheless that Nancy Murray was right. The level of mob and State violence had become relatively muted, with no let-up however in armed Tamil militancy; which only goes to prove that even mob violence in Sri Lanka happens only when engineered or supported by State machinery. There were various reasons why in that year, State and mob violence had to remain muted. President Jayewardene kept dangling before the TULF leadership District Development Councils, mere skeletons, neither fleshed with authority nor clothed with finances, but yet hoping that the TULF will accept them and retain them in their cupboard. The monthly dialogues continued. Mr. Jayewardene had also other fish to fry, in the south. 1982 was the year of the Presidential election and the Referendum. Mr. Jayewardene who should have continued as President, under the Constitution for six years, until February 1984, ("shall hold office for a term of six years") thought that the time was just ripe to cut short his first term and ensure his second 6-year term thereafter. His only major opponent Mrs. Sirimavo Bandaranaike, remained effectively side-lined from direct political participation. Her party itself was in such a state of disarray that it would not be able to throw out a candidate to match Mr. Jayewardene. He proceeded to amend the Constitution for the purpose. With his rubber-stamp two-thirds majority in Parliament, the Third Amendment became law on 27 August.

Mr. Jayewardene and the Judiciary

The Fourth Amendment followed. Delighted at the prospect of extending its own life, the Sri Lankan Parliament did it without blushing - on 4th November, 1982. The ruling party's freewheeling two-thirds majority was perpetuated until 4th August, 1989, which otherwise under the pre-amended constitution would have ended on 4th August 1983. The democratic device of a Referendum, pressed into service for the first time in the country, in December 1982 (accompanied by electoral skulduggery and governmental roughstuff) satisfied constitutional requirements. **"The most gigantic farce to be enacted in this country**

since the introduction of universal franchise over fifty years ago", commented Professor W.A. Wiswa Warnapala of the University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka (*Recent Politics in Sri Lanka: The Presidential Election and the Referendum of 1982 Navrang, New Delhi, 1983*). The judiciary was there too, in full regalia, but since its role was merely to interpret the law and the constitution as it stood, there was very little it could do to help preserve the democratic spirit. Moreover, governmental pressure was applied on judges, in more ways than one, to make them "behave"

It will be found that President Jayewardene took scrupulous care to play the political ball game according to the rules; except that he changed the rules as he went along. The cost of the Referendum in terms of democracy was that nearly 1.5 million new voters, as at 1982, were denied their right to elect their representatives. Today in 1987, the total number of disenfranchised voters (mostly Sinhalese) could well have swelled to double that number. One cannot think of any other contemporary national leader who has used the democratic apparatus with such skill and single-minded irreverence as President Jayewardene has, in his relentless pursuit of power. But if in the pursuance of power he has stopped on his tracks by any resistance, he was ready to deal with it, irrespective of the means employed. The last bulwark to fall was the Judiciary.

The judiciary in Sri Lanka had long enjoyed an enviable reputation for its sturdy independence and courageous judgements. While even under Mrs. Bandaranaike's years of power, the Executive had often taken adversary positions in respect of the judiciary, and paved the way for devaluation of its authority, it was President Jayewardene, (the son of a judge), who exhibited a cynical disregard towards the role of the judiciary. Although the following sequence of events was well known within the country, it hardly received adequate attention outside. We shall allow an eminent British jurist, Mr. Paul Sieghart to tell you the story :-

"During the campaign for the December 1982 referendum to extend the life of Parliament without a general election, a Superintendent of Police, Mr. P. Udugampola seized 20,000 pamphlets of "Voice of the Clergy", opposing the referendum proposal. A Buddhist monk, the secretary of the organisation concerned, complained to the Supreme Court, under Article 126 of the Constitution, that this Act had infringed his fundamental right to freedom of speech and expression. On 8 February 1983, the Supreme Court held in his favour, and awarded 10,000 rupees damages against the Superintendent personally, together with costs. On 2 March 1983, the Government announced that the Superintendent would be promoted, and that the State would pay the damages and costs.

"That history soon repeated itself. On 8 March 1983, International Women's Day, a Mrs. Vivienne Goonewardene (a former MP), together with some others, went to deliver a letter of protest to the American Embassy in Colombo, where she was courteously received by a First Secretary who promised to forward it to the appropriate quarters. On their way back, some police officers took away their banners. Shortly after that, Mrs. Goonewardene heard that a press photographer who had taken pictures of this incident had been taken to the police station. She proceeded there to enquire after him,and soon after found herself under arrest,thrown to the floor, and kicked. She too complained to the Supreme Court under Article 1 26 about an infringement of her fundamental rights .... In the event, it (the Court) found that the arrest was unlawful, and directed the Inspector-General of Police to conduct further inquiries, and to take appropriate action in accordance with the law. That judgement was delivered on 8 June 1983. On the following day, the Acting Inspector-General of Police announced the promotion of the Sub -Inspector who arrested her.

"Two days after that, two of the judges of the Supreme Court who had heard this case found their private houses surrounded by unruly mobs, shouting obscenities at them. (The third judge had in fact moved house sometime before, but his former residence was similarly invested). It was a frightening experience, and no policeman was in sight. They tried to telephone the police, but found the lines mysteriously out of order.

...... Such events are hardly calculated to encourage the judiciary to remain independent, or to enhance public respect for its members, their judgements, or the Rule of Law. I therefore sought further information about them during my visit. The Additional Solicitor General told me that the promotion of police officers was the sole concern of the Inspector - General of Police and the Ministry of Defence, as were enquiries about alleged offenders and their apprehension, up to the point where reports and statements were presented to him with a view to formal prosecution. The Secretary to the Ministry of Defence told me that these were matters for the Minister, and not for him. The Minister for Internal Security suggested that I should raise them with the President, which I duly did.

"The President freely conceded that he had personally ordered the promotion of the two police officers, and the payment out of public funds of the damages and costs. This, he said, had been necessary to maintain police morale.....

(Sri Lanka : A Mounting Tragedy of Errors. Report of a Mission to Sri Lanka in January 1984 on behalf of the International Commission of Jurists and its British Section, Justice. March 1984).

This then was the backdrop; this the man, with absolute untrammelled power in his hands in matters both big and small, who began his sixth year of rule by leading the already battered island nation and its 15 million citizens into a new, bloodier phase of life and a state of civil war.The holocaust that occurred in that last week of July 1983 (interestingly the first week of Jayewardene's sixth year of rule) shocked the world and startled it into a new awareness of this comparatively little known island strung up on the map hidden by the vast land mass of India, and sometimes thought by Westerners to be a part of it. President Jayewardene's Sri Lanka suddenly began to dominate international headlines and Television screens. But only the victims, the Tamils, knew the series of torments that preceded that black week of July.

An Indian reader writing in The Hindu (Sept. 3, 1983) made the following perceptive assessment :

> “...if terror has been "State-sponsored" for the decimation of a section of the population and destruction of its property and means of livelihood where then are the affected to look for sympathy and redress? The position of the Tamils in Sri Lanka today seems to be as desperate and unenviable as that ... the killing and the arson and the destruction and the looting were done with a high professional expertise and diabolical sophistication. Rioting mobs? Blood-thirsty thugs? Certainly, but led by cold-blooded arsonists and vandals who knew exactly what they were doing, what they had to do, or had been asked to do. It was deliberate, methodical and thorough, and entirely one-sided. In a riot there is loss on both sides, though not necessarily to an equal degree. But during the recent holocaust in Sri Lanka, the Tamils were always at the receiving end, resulting in the slaughter of perhaps 2,000, the ejection of about 1 35,000 from their homes, and the destruction of property valued at Rs. 400 crores. And the insults and indignities heaped on the dying or scattering Tamils could only have emanated from a fanatic and senseless hatred and the insane desire for the near-total destruction of the Tamil power and presence in Sri Lanka, No, it was not an ethnic riot : it was a pogrom, an organised massacre of an ethnic minority by the power- wielding majority ......

What was the President doing while all these happened? If our words cannot carry enough credibility, we shall allow a Human Rights activist, a Sinhalese himself (whose life was threatened in distant Australia as a result) to speak on this. Says Dr. Brian Senewiratne, MA, MBB Chir. (Cantab) MD FRCP (Lond), FRACP, as "a concerned human being" *(The July 1983 Massacre: Unanswered Questions by Dr. Brian Senewiratne, Consultant Physician, Princess Alexandra Hospital Brisbane, Australia*) :-

> “One might wonder what the President was doing during this time. The impression one gets is that his main concern was safeguarding his position as President. With hundreds, if not thousands of Tamils killed and 1 00,000 in refugee camps, there was no sign of the national leader on the State run radio or television. His silence was deafening. When he did appear on television on the evening of Thursday 28th July a full four days after the outbreak of violence, his broadcast to the nation was pathetic and partisan. Not a word of sympathy or of regret to the thousands whose lives, livelihood and property had been destroyed due to a breakdown of law and order for which he was responsible. His main regret was that he had not proscribed the party that represented some 3 million Tamils an omission which he was now rectifying, thus removing the representation of the Tamil people in Parliament. This he was doing to "appease the natural desire and request of the Sinhala people...". If ever there was a tactless and unstatesmanlike address by any leader at a time of national crisis, this was it. Moderate Tamils to whom the author spoke, declared that the President's address was more devastating than anything that had happened in the previous four days With that address to the nation, Jayewardene abdicated his right to lead the Tamil people in Sri Lanka. In an attempt to find some rational reason for this extraordinary address, the author sought as many opinions as was possible. The most charitable was that the President was "forced" to read the statement by extremists, including an extremist Cabinet Minister, and that he had delayed it as long as was possible (hence the four day silence), refusing to read it. He finally read it purely for political and possibly, physical survival. For those who know the stranglehold Jayewardene has had on the political scene over the past seven years, this explanation is hardly plausible. The performances of the Cabinet Ministers who followed their President in nightly television appearances were no better. One senior Minister was concerned about the long queues and consequent hardship to the Sinhalese people rather than the fact that some 2,000 Tamils had been killed and 100,000 were in refugee camps. To say that the Tamils have lost confidence in Jayewardene and his Ministers would be an understatement .....
>
> **"it would be too revolting and unprofitable to recount details of the acts of barbarism committed by Sinhalese mobs. All that the author a full blooded Sinhalese, can say is that for the first time, he has felt ashamed to be a Sinhalese. It is not that one necessarily identifies oneself with the hooligan mobs, but there inevitably is a collective responsibility for the behaviour of one's countrymen - hooligan, barbaric or civilized. He who watches while a fellow human being has his limbs cut off, belly slit open, petrol poured in and burnt, is only marginally less guilty than he who does it. In the General Hospital, Colombo, desperately ill Tamil patients had their intravenous infusions disconnected and were thrown out of wards because they were Tamils. Tamil doctors had to take refuge in toilets to avoid assault ......**

(to be continued)

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People

Diana and Mandela: Two celebrities meet

It happened in Cape Town, South Africa. They walked hand in hand, the Princess in polka dots and the President in shirt sleeves. But despite the apparent informality, their mutual admiration meant they were anything but relaxed. Diana, meeting one of her heroes, declared she was "thrilled". And 78-year old Mandela, one of the world's most charismatic leaders, confessed he was "trembling" as he entertained the world's most photographed woman at his official home in Cape Town on March 17.

They talked about prevention and treatment of Aids in South Africa, where nearly two million of the 41 million population are thought to be infected with HIV, and Diana promised: "If I can help in any way, I will be available to do it."

Mr.Mandela also complimented her for visiting children in Angola crippled by landmines, saying the gesture had helped South Africa decide to destroy all landmines in its possession.

The hour-long meeting came at the end of Diana's private four-day trip to Cape Town, where she visited her brother, Earl Spencer.

As she and Mandela walked into the sunshine to face the Press, the President told her: "Look how popular you are".

But when one photographer shouted, "how about a kiss"? the president replied laughingly: "It would be treason to kiss her".

(DAILY MAIL)

* * * * *

Love is a chemistry, says Castro

by Dalia Acosta Inter Press Service

Havana, March 25: Cuban President Fidel Castro confessed being "eternally enamoured by the feminine sex", and that at 70, he still fell in love "easily, but in a more platonic manner".

"No love is the same as any other. Love has much to do with chemistry, and there are as many loves as there are chemistries", Mr.Castro said in an interview published in JUVENTUD REBELDE, the weekly of the Union of Young Communists.

President Castro, considered an attractive man with a magnetic personality, said he was shy in his youth, whispering flirtatious compliment to girls, but always taking the initiative. "Women show a man that they love him, because when a man finds out that they are in love with him, he gives himself airs. Indifference is the greatest stimulus in love".

* * * * *

Mantle of the Mother

The first thing that strikes you about Sister Nirmala is here is a nun who can laugh, says a commentator. She laughs in a girlish sort of way and you'd almost expect her to cup her mouth with her little hands half way through. This small, almost bird-like woman had just stepped into the shoes of the century's most famous religious - Mother Theresa.

Born Nirmala Joshi in 1934, Sister Nirmala hails from a Brahmin family of Nepali origin. Her father served in the Indian army And like other girls of her North Bihar upper caste milieu, she could looked forward to a life of comparative ease. Sister Nirmala says that she "heard God" for the first time in the college hostel. "I was 17 then. I began my search, and seven years later, came to Calcutta for baptism".

Known to be kind and humble, Sister Nirmala has been a unifying factor among the nuns and an able administrator as well.

Eelam Tamils in London Marathon

Several Eelam Tamils are participating in the FLORA LONDON MARATHON race which takes place on April 13.

The Eelam participation is sponsored by Tamil Rehabilitation Organisation, and the proceeds will go for the care of children and the elderly who have been rendered homeless and bereft of family care by the war in the Tamil homeland.

The London marathon attracts about 50,000 runners and brings in enough proceeds to care for various charities. like cancer research, child abuse prevention services, terminally ill children etc.

Those who wish to participate are requested to contact the local organiser on (0181) 6922 608. Registration is at the National Hall, Olympia, Hamersmith Road W14 and is open at the following times: Wednesday 9 April, 10 a.m-8 p.m.;Thursday 10/Friday 11, 9 a.m.-8 p.m. Saturday 12, 8.30 a.m.- 5 p.m.

Hot Spring
A journal of commitment

In the April issue of Hot Spring

"....Mr.Burleigh, I urge you - when you are in the West again please attend a Tamil Eelam cultural event. I recommend visiting their National Heroes Day celebrations in any of the major Western capitals. I did, all on my own. It was an eye-opener. Tens of thousands of Tamils gathered to raise the Tamil Eelam national flag in sombre silence. I saw them with my own eyes - honest - and there were no LTTE guns at their backs either - believe me I looked. Here, in the West, where they have the freedom to express their identity safely, Tamil Eelam exists in their hearts, in the dances of their children, in their music, in their entire presence. That is when I realised this is not a fanatical ideology that you might equate with something like Islamic fundamentalism. This is not an intellectual/religious construct or a political philosophy like Communism or Fascism. This is national affinity genuine and raw - a basic existential truth, from which dawns the natural and irrepressible urge to live freely as a nation in one's own ancestral homeland. So does it surprise you that their fighters sacrifice themselves today so future generations of Eelam Tamils can live free from fear of the Sinhala military, protected eternally by a dedicated Tamil army determined to see the back of the last Sinhala soldier leaving their homeland ?......

Who wrote this? It is part of an OPEN LETTER TO US AMBASSADOR PETER BURLEIGH , written by a SINHALESE - ***S.DE SILVA***

Read it in the next issue of *HOT SPRING.*

Also, in the April issue, ***SURENDRA AJITH RUPESINGHE***, another Sinhalese writes on : TWO NATIONS AND ONE COUNTRY OR ONE NATION AND TWO COUNTRIES - YOU CAN DECIDE.

Plus, in the April issue, THE TAMILS IN SRI LANKA - WHEN DID THEY ARRIVE? by ***CHARLES SOMASUNDRUM.***

ANDY HIGGINBOTTOM reviews, especially for *HOT SPRING*, ***A.Sivanandan's*** political novel WHEN MEMORY DIES.

American anthropologist ***PATRICIA LAWRENCE*** writes a series of Cameos of Batticaloa life exclusively for *HOT SPRING*, begining next month's issue.

Malaysian donations for Eelam Tamil refugees

R.Mageswary reports for SUN Megazine of February 18, 1997. SUN Megazine is published in Malaysia and distributed free with the daily newspaper (Excerpts):

IT WAS THAIPUSAM DAY. MANY Hindu devotees turned up at Batu Caves to offer their prayers to Lord Muruga. Others were mesmerised by the colourful "kavadis" in various designs and shapes. Oblivious to this, the World Tamil Relief Fund members were engrossed in collecting donations for the Tamil refugees in Sri Lanka. The scorching sun did not deter their spirit.

Pathi

Their stall had posters depicting the massacres and bombings of the Tamils in war-torn Sri Lanka. Earlier, the group had intended to sell the video tapes of the killings in Sri Lanka but it was forbidden to do so by the Federal Reserve Unit which was keeping peace in the area. According to the fund's secretary, S.P.Pathi, the group was also prohibited from selling tapes, posters, T-shirts and books which supported the cause.

The many Hindus who donated generously to the fund that hot afternoon also stopped to read the posters. They were horror strickened by the accompanying photographs of the war. At the end fof the day, the group managed to raise RM 10,000.

According to Pathi, the money would be sent to the Tamil Relief Organisation of Australia, a body which is recognised by the United Nations charter. "They will buy the food, clothes, medicine and other necessary items and send them to the refugee camps in Vavuniya," he says.

A friend of Pathi who visited Vavuniya two months ago came back with a sad story of the conditions of the refugees there. He reports that the people are living in quarters that resemble cowshed are surviving on very little food.

Like him, Dr Dagmar Hellman Rajanayagam who visited Vavuniya in 1990 and 1992 reports that the living conditions of the refugees are deplorable.

According to Hellman, the people lived under canvas sheets. Many of them were undergoing trauma and this included some mothers who were unable to breastfeed as a result of that trauma and had to beg for milk for their babies.

Dr. Dagmar Hellman Rajanayagam

Says Hellman: "Since 1990, the Sri Lankan government has been saying that they are caring for the refugees but that was not what I saw. Only the Church of South India has been providing them with dry ration."

The war between the government and the LTTE headed by Velupillai Prabakaran has killed more than 50,000 people and taken a toll on the island nation's economy. The war costs estimated for 1996 is about 38.5 billion rupees (RM 2 billion) and Sri Lankan President Chandrika Kumaratunga was reported to have said that her government would need another 500 billion rupees and a further 100,000 troops to crush the LTTE.

Obituaries

Dr.C.Perumalpillai

Dr.Chelvathamby Perumalpillai, Chairman/Managing Director, Agriculture Industry Consultancy Service (AICS) and retired FAO/UN official, husband of the late Gnanambikai(Kokuvil), father of Ravi G.Pillai, Consultant (Cardiology) in John Radcliffe Hospital, Oxford, Usha Pillai Mc Carry, Research Officer, Sail Science University of Brisbane, Australia, Jeeva Pillai, Essex, World Bank, Washington, and Ranjit Pillai passed away in Colombo on March 1.

Dr.Perumalpillai who obtained his FRCVS in UK, returned to Sri Lanka where he became head of the Veterinary Department. He resigned after 16 years of service, and left for Sudan where he lectured at the University in Khartoum. He worked later at Somalia, Bangkok, and also at Rome at F.A.0. and later in Afghanistan.

* * * * *

Ganeswari Ponnudurai

Ganeswari (b:1917), wife of the late E.S.Ponnudurai (Alaveddy South), daughter of the late S.A.Kanagaratnam and the late Nagapoosani (Sandilipay North), sister of Kaneswaran and Kaileswaran, mother of Dr.Siva Sivakumaran (UK), the late Srikumaran, Jayanthi, Jayakumaran and Vasanthi (all of Sri Lanka) passed away on 2nd February and was cremated the next day in Vaddukoddai, where she was living with her daughter-in-law Rajes Srikumaran.

3, Savile Close, New Malden,
Surrey KT3 5QG, UK.

Social & Personal

Research Scientist

Sharmila Sivanesan, BSc. ARCS, MSc, Ph.D., daughter of the late Dr.M.Sivanesan, Enfield, Middlesex and of Mrs.Satyabhama Sivanesan was awarded Ph.D. by the University of Liverpool in February 1997 for her research at the Royal Liverpool Hospital. Her research was funded by National Kidney Research. She now works as a Research Scientist for Otodynamics Ltd., Hatfield, Herts. Otodynamics received the Queen's Award for export achievements in 1993.

Dr.(Miss) Keerthi Shironmany

Dr.(Miss) Keerthy Shironmani, former Director, Education ministry Colombo, daughter of late Rajaratnam (Accountant) and Mrs. A.Rajaratnam, sister of Balaranjithamany (Jaffna), Arulchelvam (C.G.R.), Srimani (France),and sister-in-law of Nadarajasuntharam (Jaffna), Rose Jayaranie (Wesley College), and Ernest Jayam (France) expired on 20 March in Colombo. Burial, General Cemetery Borella on 24 March.

151/2, Cotta Road , Colombo 8

* * * * *

C.Gunasingham

Mr.C.Gunasingham, who was Sri Lanka's Deputy High Commissioner in London, and High Commissioner in Singapore died in Singapore on 28 February. He leaves his wife Sathia, sons Suresh and Hari, and daughter Shyamala.

522 East Coast Road, Flat No.17-
03, Singapore 1545.

Dr.S.P.Rajanathen

Dr.S.P.Rajanathen Sandilipay, husband of Thevaki, father of Sanjayen, father-in-law of Revethy, and son-in-law of the late Mr. and Mrs.S.A.Wijayanayagam of Colombo, passed away at Scarborough Centenary Hospital, Canada on March 10. Remains were cremated in Toronto on March 12.

1512-1580, Sandhurst Circle,
Scarborough, Ontario M1V 2L3,
Canada

* * * * *

Mrs.Parimalam Arasaratnam

Parimalam, wife of late J.M. Arasaratnam of Navalar Road, Nallur South, Jaffna,mother of Jeyaseelan (UK),Indra (Sydney), Sakuntala (Tokyo) and Dharmaseelan (Chennai), mother-in-law of late Carmini and of Vimala, A.C.George and Silan Kadirgamar. Cremation at Galkissa Cemetery on 23 March.

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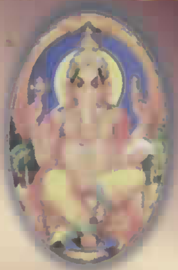

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